A U M

Sri Krishna is the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings; his unthinkable glory irradiates all that is manifest and all that is unmanifest. This infinite universe, its life and its beauty, and its joy, rest but on his foot, from which flows the sacred stream of the Ganges, whose mortal aspect alone is known on this earth. Krishna reveals his infinity of attributes to his beloved worshipper, and yet he is devoid of attributes.

It is the crown of devotion to have these mysteries revealed to the inner gaze. May all his lovers reach that Goal.—**Vaishnava Scriptures.**

Inquire about him by prostration, by question, and by service, and the wise men who know the truth, will give you the knowledge. —**Bhagavad-Gita.**

THEOSOPHY

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SOME UNAVOIDABLE DEDUCTIONS

THE last message of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Theosophists in Convention assembled was written in April 1891. A reprint of this message appeared in the March number of this magazine.

The message begins by saying that it afforded the third occasion for H. P. B. to send a delegate to America, the previous ones being Dr. Archibald Keightley, and Mr. Bertram Keightley. As will appear from the text of the last message, Mrs. Annie Besant was chosen as the delegate in 1891 to represent the English Branches and to deliver the message.

It may be interesting to note that the Theosophical Society had at that time been in existence about sixteen years. Mrs. Besant had joined the Society about three years previously and was a comparatively new member. She naturally took prominence in England because of her public work in other fields and her ability as a speaker and writer, and was gladly accepted and given honor by the older students for the qualities and devotion shown.

When Mrs. Besant left H. P. B.'s presence to go as delegate to America, she never entered it again, for the H. P. B. body was deserted on May 8th while Mrs. Besant was on the ocean, homeward bound.

To those who have grasped some realization of the meaning of the Theosophical Movement the status of H. P. B. as Teacher and

Messenger of the Lodge of Masters appears as an unquestioned fact, and all such will have no hesitation in according to H. P. B. a full knowledge of the end in view, the then present conditions in the Society, and the tendencies, weaknesses and defects in the natures of all her students, and most particularly of those individuals who in the nature of things had assumed positions of prominence among their fellow students. With all this in mind, the message under consideration is of the utmost importance as a final and prophetic warning. Those who are familiar with the course of events as shown in the history of the Movement since 1891 will find no difficulty in applying the message to those events and the individuals most concerned in them.

To quote from the message:

"Fellow-Theosophists, I am proud of your noble work in the New World; Sisters and Brothers of America, I thank and bless you for your unremitting labours for the common cause so dear to us all.

"Let me remind you all once more that such work is now more than ever needed. The period which we have now reached in the cycle that will close between 1897-8 is, and will continue to be, one of great conflict and continued strain. If the T. S. can hold through it, good; if not, *while Theosophy will remain unscathed,* the Society will perish—perchance most ingloriously—and the world will suffer."

Let it be remembered that this message was written not many days before H. P. B. left her body, and that if there ever was a time when a clear view of the future was possible it was at this time. One cannot help but feel the extreme pathos of the situation. Here was One who saw and knew the weaknesses and the danger, and She could do nothing but urge, warn and encourage; it calls to mind the passage in the New Testament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Denial and betrayal has often been the portion of the Great Ones who point out the true Path.

Mention is made of the period between 1891 and 1898 as one of great conflict and continued strain. History has verified the statement. During those years was consummated the disintegration of the Theosophical Society that was created and sustained by H. P. B. The guiding hand of the Teacher withdrawn, the time came for a test of the knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members upon whom fell the task of directing the Society. The results are before us. It looks very much as though the statement made by H. P. B. in the "Key to Theosophy" was coming true. "Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart. You must remember that all our members have been bred and born in some creed or religion, that

all are more or less of their generation both physically and mentally, and consequently that their judgment is but too likely to be warped and unconsciously biased by some or all of these influences. If, then, they cannot be freed from such inherent bias, or at least taught to recognise it instantly and so avoid being led away by it, the result can only be that the Society will drift off on to some sandbank of thought or another, and there remain a stranded carcass to moulder and die."

The full history of how the present status of Theosophical organizations came about, is yet to be written, and it will be when the time comes; in the meantime is it not clear that the following quotation from the message under consideration was not heeded, though placed there with full intent and knowledge?

"Self-watchfulness is never more necessary than when a personal wish to lead, and wounded vanity, dress themselves in the peacock's feathers of devotion and altruistic work."

Nor was it true in fact that we had been left without "a witness on the scene;" had those students who were most prominent in the affairs of the Society been more truly observant, less ambitious and personal, all that has occurred would not have been recorded. There was "a witness on the scene," had been all the time; whose record was clear and fully attested from the very inception of the Theosophical Society, and to cap the climax of this record, to afford every opportunity for all to look in the right direction, there was handed to the delegate from H. P. B. a separate and additional message to the Convention which reads as follows:

"To the Fifth Convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society:

"Brother Theosophists:

"I have purposely omitted any mention of my *oldest friend* and fellow-worker, W. Q. Judge, in my general address to you, because I think that his unflagging and self-sacrificing efforts for the building up of Theosophy in America deserves special mention.

"Had it not been for W. Q. Judge, Theosophy would not be where it is today in the United States. It is he who has mainly built up the movement among you, and he who has proved in a thousand ways his entire loyalty to the best interests of Theosophy and the Society.

"Mutual admiration should play no part in a Theosophical Convention, *but honour should be given where honour is due,* and I gladly take this opportunity of stating in public, by the mouth of my friend and colleague, Annie Besant, my deep appreciation of the work of your General Secretary, and of publicly tendering him my most sincere thanks and deeply-felt gratitude, in the name of Theosophy for the noble work he is doing and has done.

"Yours fraternally,

"H. P. BLAVATSKY."

In view of what took place subsequently, and which culminated

in an attack upon the honor and integrity of Wm. Q. Judge, the above is especially significant.

Admitting all that H. P. B. was, and her powers of prevision, this very last communication of H. P. B. should have been sufficient to have turned the eyes of her students in the right direction. More might not be said, for that which was most desired was the arousing of the intuitive faculties of those concerned, all that could be done to arouse this was done; those who looked for and expected personal guidance because of the positions assumed in the Society, failed to see what was placed so plainly before them, and the results, as might have been expected, were disastrous. Certain facts were well known to the most prominent members of the Society at that time, namely, that Wm. Q. Judge was one of the original Founders of the Society; that he had been left alone to carry on the work in the New World, the place of most importance; that he and H. P. B. had been in full accord first, last and all the time; that She lost no opportunity to place on record Her full confidence in, and abiding love for Him; and that his writings bore the same stamp of authority, of knowledge and wisdom, that are shown in those of H. P. B.

Perhaps it was these very facts that precipitated the attack? Says "Light on the Path," "Ambition is the first curse; the great tempter of the man who is rising above his fellows. It is the simplest form of looking for reward. Men of intelligence and power are led away from their higher possibilities by it continually. . . Its results turn to dust and ashes in the mouth."

Not all were blind however; many were the students whose discrimination led them to see aright, but they were powerless to change the course of events; they could but abide the time and opportunity for a return to the original lines.

From first to last, the vital error has been made of failing to place unbounded confidence in the knowledge, wisdom, and integrity of the Teacher, a virtual denial of the Source itself. Those who were found trying to explain H. P. B., a form of denial, ended by attacking while pretending to uphold. Those who attacked H. P. B. or belittled Her, were found attacking W. Q. J., for these Two stand together, and attack on one is an attack on both.

The time for temporizing has passed, and a somnolent tolerance must give way to an active and accurate consideration of things as they have been, and are. Those who may have erred, may not be condemned, but error must not be permitted to obscure the lamp of knowledge. To this, some have pledged their lives and fortunes, and many others will, as soon as they have been enabled to see a true course. Let one of the concluding sentences of the message sink into our hearts. "After all, every wish and thought I can utter are summed up in this one sentence, the never dormant wish of my heart, 'Be Theosophists, work for Theosophy!' Theosophy first, and Theosophy last; for its *practical* realization alone can save the Western world from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now

divides race from race, one nation from the other; and from that hatred of class and social considerations that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples. Theosophy *alone* can save it from sinking entirely into that mere luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as civilizations have done. In your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great also is the responsibility."

"Arise. O Atlanteans, and repair the
errors of the past."

"THE THEOSOPHICAL MAHATMAS"

IT is with sincere and profound regret—though with no surprise, prepared as I am for years for such declarations—that I have read in the Rochester *Occult Word,* edited by Mrs. J. Cables, the devoted president of the T. S. of that place, her joint editorial with Mr. W. T. Brown. This sudden revulsion of feeling is perhaps quite natural in the lady, for she has never had the opportunities given her as Mr. Brown has; and her feeling when she writes that after "a great desire * * to be put into communication with the Theosophical Mahatmas we (they) have come to the conclusion that it is useless to strain the psychical eyes towards the Himalayas" * * * is undeniably shared by many theosophists. Whether the complaints are justified, and also whether it is the "Mahatmas" or theosophists themselves who are to blame for it is a question that remains to be settled. It has been a pending case for several years and will have to be now decided, as the two complainants declare over their signatures that "we (they) need not run after Oriental Mystics, *who deny their ability to help us.*" The last sentence, in italics, has to be seriously examined. I ask the privilege to make a few remarks thereon.

To begin with, the tone of the whole article is that of a true *manifesto.* Condensed and weeded of its exuberance of Biblical expressions it comes to this paraphrastical declaration: "We have knocked at their door, and they have not answered us; we have prayed for bread, they have denied us even a stone." The charge is quite serious; nevertheless, that it is neither just nor fair—is what I propose to show.

As I was the first in the United States to bring the existence of our Masters into publicity; and, having exposed the holy names of two members of a Brotherhood hitherto unknown to Europe and America, (save to a few mystics and Initiates of every age), yet sacred and revered throughout the East, and especially India, causing vulgar speculation and curiosity to grow around those blessed names, and finally leading to a public rebuke, I believe it my duty to contradict the fitness of the latter by explaining the

whole situation, as I feel myself the chief culprit. It may do good to some, perchance, and will interest some others.

Let no one think withal, that I come out as a champion or a defender of those who most assuredly need no defense. What I intend, is to present simple *facts,* and let after this the situation be judged on its own merits. To the plain statement of our brothers and sisters that they have been "living on husks," "hunting after strange gods" without receiving admittance, I would ask in my turn, as plainly: "Are you sure of having knocked at the right door? Do you feel certain that you have not lost your way by *stopping so often on your journey at strange doors, behind which lie in wait the fiercest enemies of those you were searching for?*" Our MASTERS are not "a jealous god;" they are simply holy mortals, nevertheless, however, higher than any in this world, morally, intellectually and spiritually. However holy and advanced in the science of the Mysteries—they are still men, members of a Brotherhood, who are the first in it to show themselves subservient to its time-honored laws and rules. And one of the first rules in it demands that those who start on their journey *Eastward,* as candidates to the notice and favors of those who are the custodians of those Mysteries, should proceed by the straight road, without stopping on every sideway and path, seeking to join other "Masters" and professors often of the Left-Hand Science, that they should have confidence and show trust and patience, besides several other conditions to fulfill. Failing in all of this from first to last, what right has any man or woman to complain of the liability of the Masters to help them?

Truly "'The Dwellers of the Threshold' are within!"

Once that a theosophist would become a candidate for either *chelaship* or favours, he must be aware of the mutual pledge, tacitly, if not formally offered and accepted between the two parties, and, *that such a pledge is sacred.* It is a bond of *seven* years of probation. If during that time, notwithstanding the many human shortcomings and mistakes of the candidate (save two which it is needless to specify in print) he remains throughout every temptation *true to the chosen Master,* or Masters, (in the case of *lay* candidates), and as faithful to the Society founded at their wish and under their orders, then the theosophist will be initiated into ——— thenceforward allowed to communicate with his *guru* unreservedly, all his failings, save this one, as specified, may be overlooked: they belong to his future *Karma,* but are left for the present, to the discretion and judgment of the Master. He alone has the power of judging whether even during those long seven years the chela will be favored regardless of his mistakes and sins, with occasional communications with, and from the guru. The latter thoroughly posted as to the causes and motives that led the candidate into sins of omission and commission is the only one to judge of the advisability or inadvisability of bestowing encouragement; as he alone is entitled to it, seeing that he is himself under the inexorable law of Karma, which no one from the Zulu

savage up to the highest archangel can avoid—and that he has to assume the great responsibility of the causes created by himself.

Thus, the chief and the only indispensible condition required in the candidate or chela on probation, is simply unswerving fidelity to the chosen Master and his purposes. This is a condition *sine qua non;* not as I have said, on account of any jealous feeling, but simply because *the magnetic rapport between the two once broken, it becomes at each time doubly difficult to re-establish it again;* and that it is neither just nor fair, that the Masters should strain their powers for those whose future course and final desertion they very often can plainly foresee. Yet, how many of those, who, expecting as I would call it "favours by anticipation," and being disappointed, instead of humbly repeating *mea culpa,* tax the Masters with selfishness and injustice. They will deliberately break the thread of connection ten times in one year, and yet expect each time to be taken back on the old lines! I know of one theosophist—let him be nameless though it is hoped he will recognize himself—a quiet, intelligent young gentleman, a mystic by nature, who, in his ill advised enthusiasm and impatience, changed *Masters* and his ideas about half a dozen times in less than three years. First he offered himself, was accepted on probation and took the vow of chelaship; about a year later, he suddenly got the idea of getting married, though he had several proofs of the corporeal presence of his Master, and had several favours bestowed upon him. Projects of marriage failing, he sought "Masters" under other climes, and became an enthusiastic Rosicrucian; then he returned to theosophy as a Christian mystic; then again sought to enliven his austerities with a wife; then gave up the idea and turned a spiritualist. And now having applied once more "to be taken back as a chela" (I have his letter) and his Master remaining silent —he renounced him altogether, to seek in the words of the above manifesto—his old "Essenian Master and *to test the spirits* in his name."

The able and respected editor of the "Occult Word" and her Secretary are right, and have chosen the only true path in which with a very small dose of blind faith, they are sure to encounter no deceptions or disappointments. "It is pleasant for some of us," they say, "to obey the call of the 'Man of Sorrows' who will not turn any away, because they are unworthy or have not scored up a certain percentage of personal merit." How *do* they know? unless they accept the cynically awful and pernicious dogma of the Protestant Church, that teaches the forgiveness of the blackest crime, provided the murderer *believes sincerely* that the blood of his "Redeemer" has saved him at the last hour—what is it but *blind* unphilosophical faith? Emotionalism is *not* philosophy; and Buddha devoted his long self-sacrificing life to tear people away precisely from that *evil breeding* superstition. Why speak of Buddha then, in the same breath? The doctrine of salvation by *personal* merit, and *self* forgetfulness is the corner-stone of the teaching of the Lord Buddha. Both the writers may have and very likely they

did—"hunt after *strange* gods;" but these *were not our* MASTERS. They have "denied Him thrice" and now propose "with bleeding feet and prostrate spirit" to "pray that He (Jesus) may take us (them) once more under his wing," etc. The "Nazarene Master" is sure to oblige them so far. Still they will be "living on *husks" plus* "blind faith." But in this they are the best judges, and no one has a right to meddle with their private beliefs in our Society; and heaven grant that they should not in their fresh disappointment turn our bitterest enemies one day.

Yet, to those Theosophists, who are displeased with the Society in general, no one has ever made to you any rash promises; least of all, has either the Society or its founders ever offered their "Masters" as a *chromo-premium* to the best behaved. For years every new member has been told that *he was promised nothing,* but had everything to expect only from his own personal merit. The theosophist is left free and untrammeled in his actions. Whenever displeased—*alia tentanda via est*—no harm in trying elsewhere; unless, indeed, one has offered himself and is decided to win the Masters' favors. To such especially, I now address myself and ask: Have you fulfilled *your* obligations and pledges? Have you, who would fain lay all the blame on the Society and the Masters—the latter the embodiment of charity, tolerance, justice and universal love—have you *led the life* requisite, and the conditions required from one who becomes a candidate? Let him who feels in his heart and conscience that he has,—that he has never once failed seriously, never doubted his Master's wisdom, never sought *other* Master or Masters in his impatience to become an Occultist with powers; and that he has never betrayed his theosophical duty in thought or deed,—let him, I say, rise and *protest.* He can do so fearlessly; there is no penalty attached to it, and he will not even receive a reproach, let alone be excluded from the Society—the broadest and most liberal in its views, the most Catholic of all the Societies known or unknown. I am afraid my invitation will remain unanswered. During the eleven years of the existence of the Theosophical Society I have known, out of the seventy-two regularly accepted chelas on probation and the hundreds of *lay* candidates—only *three* who have not hitherto failed, and *one only* who had a full success. No one forces any one into chelaship; no promises are uttered, none except the mutual pledge between Master and the would-be-chela. Verily, verily, many are the called but few are chosen—or rather few who have the patience of going to the bitter end, if bitter we can call simple perseverance and singleness of purpose. And what about the Society, in general, outside of India? Who among the many thousands of members does *lead the life?* Shall any one say because he is a strict vegetarian—*elephants and cows are that*—or happens to lead a celibate life, after a stormy youth in the opposite direction; or because he studies the *Bhagavat-Gita* or the "Yoga philosophy" *upside down,* that he is a theosophist *according to the Masters' hearts?* As it is not the cowl that makes the monk, so, no long hair with a poetical

vacancy on the brow are sufficient to make of one a faithful follower of *divine* Wisdom. Look around you, and behold our UNIVERSAL Brotherhood so called! The Society founded to remedy the glaring evils of christianity, to shun bigotry and intolerance, *cant* and superstition and to cultivate real universal love extending even to the dumb brute, what has it become in Europe and America in these eleven years of trial? In one thing only we have succeeded to be considered higher than our Christian Brothers, who, according to Lawrence Oliphant's graphic expression "Kill one another for Brotherhood's sake and fight as devils for the love of God"—and this is that we have made away *with every dogma* and are now justly and wisely trying to make away with the last vestige of even nominal authority. But in every other respect we are as bad as they are: backbiting, slander, uncharitableness, criticism, incessant war-cry and ding of mutual rebukes that Christian Hell itself might be proud of! And all this, I suppose is the Masters' fault: THEY will not help those who help others on the way of salvation and liberation from selfishness—with kicks and scandals? Truly *we are* an example to the world, and fit companions for the holy ascetics of the snowy Range!

And now a few words more before I close. I will be asked: "And who are you to find fault with us? Are you, who claim nevertheless, communion with the Masters and receive daily favors from Them; Are you so holy, faultless, and so worthy?" To this I answer: I AM NOT. Imperfect and faulty is my nature; many and glaring are my shortcomings—and for this my Karma is heavier than that of any other Theosophist. *It is*—and must be so—since for so many years I stand set in the pillory, a target for my enemies and some friends also.

Yet I accept the *trial* cheerfully. Why? Because I know that I have, all my faults notwithstanding, Master's protection extended over me. And if I have it, the reason for it is simply this: for thirty-five years and more, ever since 1851 that I saw any Master *bodily* and personally for the first time, *I have never once denied or even doubted Him,* not even in thought. Never a reproach or a murmur against Him has escaped my lips, or entered even my brain for one instant under the heaviest trials. From the first I knew what I had to expect, for I was told that, which I have never ceased repeating to others: as soon as one steps on the Path leading to the Ashrum of the blessed Masters—the last and only custodians of primitive Wisdom and Truth—his Karma, instead of having to be distributed throughout his long life, falls upon him in a block and crushes him with its whole weight. He who believes in what he professes and in his Master, will stand it and come out of the trial victorious; he *who doubts,* the coward who fears to receive his just dues and tries to avoid justice being done—FAILS. He will not escape Karma just the same, but he will only lose that for which he has risked its untimely visits. This is why having been so constantly, so mercilessly slashed by my

Karma using my enemies as unconscious weapons, that I have stood it all. I felt sure that Master would not permit that I should perish; that He would always appear at the *eleventh* hour—*and so he did.* Three times I was saved from death by Him, the last time almost against my will; when I went again into the cold, wicked world out of love for Him, who has taught me what I know and made me what I am. Therefore, I do His work and bidding, and this is what has given me the lion's strength to support shocks—physical and mental, one of which would have killed any theosophist who would go on doubting of the mighty protection. Unswerving devotion to Him who embodies the duty traced for me, and belief in the Wisdom—collectively, of that grand, mysterious, yet actual Brotherhood of holy men—is my only merit, and the cause of my success in Occult philosophy. And now repeating after the Paraguru—my Master's MASTER—the words He had sent as a message to those who wanted to make of the Society a "miracle club" instead of a Brotherhood of Peace, Love and mutual assistance—"Perish rather, the Theosophical Society and its hapless Founders," I say perish their twelve years' labour and their very lives rather than that I should see what I do today: theosophists, outvying political "rings" in their search for personal power and authority; theosophists slandering and criticizing each other as two rival Christian sects might do; finally theosophists refusing to *lead the life* and then criticising and throwing slurs on the grandest and noblest of men, because tied by their wise laws—hoary with age and based on an experience of human nature milleniums old—those Masters refuse to interfere with Karma and to play second fiddle to every theosophist who calls upon Them and whether he deserves it or not.

Unless radical reforms in our American and European Societies are speedily resorted to—I fear that before long there will remain but one centre of Theosophical Societies and Theosophy in the whole world—namely, in India; on that country I call all the blessings of my heart. All my love and aspirations belong to my beloved brothers, the sons of old Aryavarta—the Mother-land of my MASTER.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

(The foregoing article was first printed by Mr. Judge in *The Path* for December, 1886.)

(The statement in the last paragraph, that unless radical reforms in the American and European Societies were speedily resorted to there would remain but one center of Theosophical Societies and Theosophy in the whole world—namely, in India, *was written in 1886.* Subsequent writings of H. P. B. show that the necessary changes had been made and a different position assumed. It is also evident that the "one center" does not refer to any European organization established in India, but to the Real Center of which She was the accredited and recognized agent.—EDS.)

OCCULTISM FOR BARTER

ESOTERIC COLLEGES AND FALSE PROPHETS

WHEN Jesus of Nazareth went to the Temple in Jerusalem he, it is said, drove money changers out of the courts; and later he said that many false prophets should arise. For the Christian that temple symbolized the Palace of God, and the occultist knows that the story really means the driving out from the heart of all materialistic thought. Jesus, with a prophet's eye, saw what has so often come to pass since then,—false prophets arising on every side, both in and out of the Church that bears his name.

In the present days no country can boast as ours of having so many false prophets, who, taking advantage of the popular leaning to mysticism hang out signs of various kinds, but one and all offering for sale the things of the spirit. It is not to magazines or books dealing with these subjects that we refer, for printing and paper must be paid for when one wants to lay his ideas before the people. But it is quite a different thing when men or women offer to sell to the buyer, for money, the knowledge of self or any mystery in nature pertaining to spiritual things.

In one place we have a man pretending that he is a reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and in another, one deliberately stating that he is Gautama Buddha come again in order to correct errors in his promulgated doctrines. Again, we find astrologers and diviners, mediums and seers, opening shops wherein they dispense oracles to the willing, gullible people. One is quite as pernicious as the other, for the taint of money will corrupt anything. And those who have means are somewhat to blame, in that they imagine that their money can procure them knowledge of the deep, spiritual things of Nature.

The latest thing in this line is that which began in Boston soon after the starting there of a magazine called the Esoteric. With that journal we had no concern, for its founders had a right to use it to promulgate just as much of truth as they had hold of in the same way that the PATH gives out its ideas of nature and of man. But in the beginning, the managers of that magazine let it be understood that they were, or one of them—to wit, Mr. Hiram Butler—was a theosophist, or member of the Theosophical Society. An examination of the records just made shows that he never was a member of that body.

Not very long ago a bulky book was circulated by this prophet, in which mysterious statements were made that one Vidya Nyaka desired to found a College in the U. S. to teach the stockholders (!)

and students all the mysteries, and among others, the power of acquiring vast wealth, and it was said that after the college was organized unlimited means would be at its disposal, drawn from the funds at command of adepts; but, as a preliminary merely, the faithful must disburse. And disburse they did. We grieve to say that many theosophists sent in money to this scheme which, on its very face, boldly showed that it was founded as a means of giving its stockholders wealth.

The first note was sounded in an alleged "Letter to a Seeker" published by the *Esoteric*. This was a fraud which took in theosophists who do not get acquainted with what is written in out-of-the-way places. It was a hit at the Theosophical Society and at the Adepts, pretending that They were cold and dead and selfish, and that only the Solar Biologists were fitted to help Americans. It exhibited ignorance when it left the domain of plagiarism. What it plagiarized from is a book called "The Wisdom of the Adepts," by Rev. Thomas Lake Harris, in which he attempted to show that Buddhist Adepts are systematically trying to subvert Christianity in America, and this "Letter to a Seeker" took as sub-title, "The Wisdom of the Wise." Fragments are taken, word for word, from pages 8, 9, 319, 249, 371, 248, 249, of Harris's book, and used to construct this letter in the *Esoteric* and signed *Nemo*. If Rev. Harris did not write it, then it was stolen from him; or, if he did, then the *Esoteric* is a secret organ for a Christian sect which is anti-theosophical, while it outwardly professes theosophy. Either of these alternatives is equally damaging.

The second note was a loud one on a brass bugle heralding the founding of the Esoteric College, as the direct outcome of the efforts of the magazine, with Mr. Butler at the head of it, and Vidya Nyaka in the mysterious distance with a medley of nonsensical letters at the end of his name. The real name of Vidya N. is Ohmart, and he is known to many men in Boston who experienced his wiles before Butler joined hands with him. Before that, Ohmart was satisfied to deal with men on pure *business* principles, but when he combined with Butler he played upon the credulity of the mystically inclined people who sincerely desired to know the things of the spirit and foolishly thought that the great pretensions of this pair hid great knowledge and wisdom.

It all speedily ended with a frightful expose in the *N. Y. World*, *Boston Globe* and *Herald*, and *Philadelphia Enquirer*. The worst of it was that the press mixed the Theosophical Society in it, entirely without cause but wholly because of Butler's theosophic claims, and to-day hundreds of people think that exposure was an exposure of humbug on our part. Such are the facts; hear now of the Karma:

Mr. Butler and all his confederates have to some slight extent injured the Theosophical Society, and the nemesis provided by the immutable law of Karma will follow him until the full consequence is felt and compensation made. We do not need sworn zealots

to wreak a vengeance. That will follow, whatever it be, because behind the Theosophical Society is a mighty power that works by law and by will, and not by money. No wealth can buy its favor nor avert its care for its members and for the enemies of the Society. Already material damages and great annoyances have come to these men who dared to sell and buy in the Temple of God. And the same nemesis, but perhaps with lesser fury, will pursue all those members of the Theosophical Society who have in their hearts said, "Lo, here is one who offers at a price that which the Adepts of the Theosophical Society say can only be obtained through toil and unselfish effort; let us go buy of him." We are sorry for both, but surely lessons must be learned, and we had thought that the lesson was taught when the mysterious H. B. of L. invaded our ranks seeking recruits and getting those who would not try the right way. The end is not yet, the hour has not struck, but it will arrive. Let us then rely upon Karma and do our duty.

(The foregoing article was first printed by Mr. Judge in *The Path* for March, 1889.)

STRAY MEMORANDA

"WHY not," I said to a Master's messenger, "give to all these gaping theosophical children throughout the Society, the whole truth at once? Collect all the doctrines and the interlocking prophecies together, whether about the world of men or the world of the Gods; arrange all the facts respecting the evolution of men on the planet, with all the details about dividing of races and the hidden descent of tribes: then give it out for good and all."

Looking at me seriously, he said, "Would they believe it? I think not." But he left behind him some stray jottings * * *.

"The science-worshipping theosophist, thinking that the brighter day will only come when men of science are convinced that the Masters know all that is to be known, would have revelations regarding 'missing links' and the dispersion of races. But the dawn of a new age is not heralded by such divulgements; and to tell the facts before the time would only result in strife, bitterness, and laughter.

"Not even the devotees of the Worship of the Dead, who follow after mediums and say that the souls of the deceased return to detestable surroundings in heated cabinets, would admit a single fact that militated against pet theories. Yet we know that the souls of good men who have died do not trouble the world. They leave behind them the 'coat of skin,' full of what wickedness they were unable to disperse in life. This unsavory remainder is wor-

shipped by the medium-hunter, and because out of the astral light it reports facts and words not thought of by the sitters, the real man is accused, and by default convicted, of returning here. Such spiritualists as believe thus are consecrating corpses and making Gods of the demons of the air. Will they believe this?

"The extraordinary psychical manifestations occurring during the last forty years all over the Western world have been dubbed by the 'spiritists' as the awakening of men and the new, best, last philosophy, whereas they merely marked the changes beginning in the great heart and mind of the collective Western man. In relation to what is heralded and will be, they are as is the changing voice of the youthful chorister to its full development into a basso profundo.

"By careful and painstaking attention to this worship of the dead, new forms are created in the astral light, compounded of the reliquae of deceased people and the matter added by elementals; they imitate the dead in word, gesture, recollection, and other indicia of identity, and delude the living, because these elementals like the new surroundings thus found. One small section only of the elemental nature is thus affected, but it likes not to relinquish a grasp once taken upon us mortal-gods.

"Although this Death-Cult calls itself scientific, we have not yet heard of any careful or other collecting of statistics about appearances through mediums of the same deceased person at more than two places at once. But any careful reader can find that such things are reported every day and no deduction drawn from it.

"The real deceased one in his blissful state after death feels a twinge every time his shade is called up in the charnel house of a living medium's body.

"The money paid to mediums for 'spirit communications' is haunted by astral beings of a certain order. They plunge upon the medium, and find their appropriate dwelling in the bad and not in the good part of his nature. The temple of the Holy Ghost is thus turned into a den of thieves.

"The trajectory of a spiritual being through space is visible to the human eye from only one point, and very often it is seen as a curved line when in fact it is otherwise. One sort of elemental being moves in an epicycloidal curve. Looked at by one person's eye it is a straight line, to the other observer it is a curve, while a third sees it as a triangle.

"Every thought has with it in its journey all the physical, mental, and moral attributes of the thinker; but the recipient may be able only to perceive on of those attributes, and then, instead of getting the thinker's thought, he may hear the rate of vibration in the body of the thinker, and all he sees then is a small white star.

"There are beings who have their existence in your body. Some live but a moment, others for longer periods.

"Where cities are 'destined' to be built, whole armies of celes-

tial beings build an imaginary city and try to induce men to erect the objective structures there; and the founding of a city is an occasion of joy or deep sorrow for those who can see the nature of its builders.

"There are certain spots in the land now uninhabited, over which swarm hosts of elementals. They have their own city there, and when men pass that way they whisper to them, show pictures of a city, of its buildings, and its future; and soon or late the human beings come and erect their dwellings there.

"Your American continent is full of these spots, and crowded with memories of past glories that elbow each other for space.

"Although each thought goes on through infinite space, many thoughts sent out from your mind are, so to say, lost on the way; for they meet opposite thoughts or stronger ones which deflect them from the course desired, and they thus fly on to a goal not in the mind of the thinker, or through weakness of impulse they fall easily away from the appointed orbit.

"In one aspect the Astral Light may be compared to a howling mob of rival musicians, each engaged on a different tune. Who enters there has need to know how to distinguish the right tune, or dire confusion will result in his mind." URBAN.

(The foregoing article was first printed by Mr. Judge in *The Path* for February, 1889.)

THE DWELLER OF THE THRESHOLD

HAS such a being any existence? Has any one ever seen it? Are there many or several, and has it any sex?

Such are the questions asked by nearly all students who read theosophical books. Some of those who all their life believed in fairies in secret and in the old tales of giants, have proceeded to test the question by calling upon the horrid shade to appear and freeze their blood with the awful eyes that Bulwer Lytton has made so famous in his "Zanoni." But the Dweller is not to be wooed in such a way, and has not appeared at all, but by absolute silence leads the invoker to at last scout the idea altogether.

But this same inquirer then studies theosophical books with diligence, and enters after a time on the attempt to find out his own inner nature. All this while the Dweller has waited, and, indeed, we may say, in complete ignorance as yet of the neophyte's existence. When the study has proceeded far enough to wake up long dormant senses and tendencies, the Dweller begins to feel that such a person as this student is at work. Certain influences are then felt, but not always with clearness, and at first never ascribed to the agency of what had long ago been relegated to the lumber-room of exploded superstitions. The study goes still farther

and yet farther, until the awful Thing has revealed itself; and when that happens, it is not a superstition nor is it disbelieved. It can then never be gotten rid of, but will stay as a constant menace until it is triumphed over *and left behind*.

When Glyndon was left by Mejnour in the old castle in Italy, he found two vases which he had received directions not to open. But disobeying these he took out the stoppers, and at once the room was filled with intoxication, and soon the awful, loathsome creature appeared whose blazing eyes shone with malignant glare and penetrated to Glyndon's soul with a rush of horror such as he had never known.

In this story Lytton desired to show that the opening of the vases is like the approach of an enquirer to the secret recesses of his own nature. He opens the receptacles, and at first is full of joy and a sort of intoxication due to the new solutions offered for every problem in life and to the dimly seen vistas of power and advancement that open before him. If the vases *are kept open long enough,* the Dweller of the Threshold surely appears, and no man is exempt from the sight. Goodness is not sufficient to prevent its appearance, because even the good man who finds a muddy place in the way to his destination must of necessity pass through it to reach the end.

We must ask next, WHAT is the Dweller? It is the combined evil influence that is the result of the wicked thoughts and acts of the age in which any one may live, and it assumes to each student a definite shape at each appearance, being always either of one sort or changing each time. So that with one it may be as Bulwer Lytton pictured it, or with another only a dread horror, or even of any other sort of shape. It is specialized for each student and given its form by the tendencies and natural physical and psychical combinations that belong to his family and nation.

Where, then, does it dwell? is the very natural inquiry which will follow. It dwells in its own plane, and that may be understood in this manner.

Around each person are planes or zones, beginning with spirit and running down to gross matter. These zones extend, within their lateral boundaries, all around the being. That is to say, if we figure ourselves as being in the centre of a sphere, we will find that there is no way of escaping or skipping any one zone, because it extends in every direction until we pass its lateral boundary.

When the student has at last gotten hold of a real aspiration and some glimmer of the blazing goal of truth where Masters stand, and has also aroused the determination to know and to be, the whole bent of his nature, day and night, is to reach out beyond the limitations that hitherto had fettered his soul. No sooner does he begin thus to step a little forward, than he reaches the zone just beyond mere bodily and mental sensations.

At first the minor dwellers of the threshold are aroused, and they in temptation, in bewilderment, in doubt or confusion, assail

him. He only feels the effect, for they do not reveal themselves as shapes. But persistence in the work takes the inner man farther along, and with that progress comes a realization to the outer mind of the experiences met, until at last he has waked up the whole force of the evil power that naturally is arrayed against the good end he has set before him. Then the Dweller takes what form it may. That it does take some definite shape or impress itself with palpable horror is a fact testified to by many students.

One of those related to me that he saw it as an enormous slug with evil eyes whose malignancy could not be described. As he retreated—that is, grew fearful—, it seemed joyful and portentous, and when retreat was complete it was not. Then he fell further back in thought and action, having occasionally moments of determination to retrieve his lost ground. Whenever these came to him, the dreadful slug again appeared, only to leave him when he had given up again his aspirations. And he knew that he was only making the fight, if ever he should take it up again, all the harder.

Another says that he has seen the Dweller concentrated in the apparent form of a dark and sinister-looking man, whose slightest motions, whose merest glance, expressed the intention and ability to destroy the student's reason, and only the strongest effort of will and faith could dispel the evil influence. And the same student at other times has felt it as a vague, yet terrible, horror that seemed to enwrap him in its folds. Before this he has retreated for the time to prepare himself by strong self-study to be pure and brave for the next attack.

These things are not the same as the temptations of Saint Anthony. In his case he seems to have induced an hysterical erotic condition, in which the unvanquished secret thoughts of his own heart found visible appearance.

The Dweller of the Threshold is not the product of the brain, but is an influence found in a plane that is extraneous to the student, but in which his success or failure will be due to his own purity. It is not a thing to be dreaded by mere dilletanti theosophists; and no earnest one who feels himself absolutely called to work persistently to the highest planes of development for the good of humanity, and not for his own, need fear aught that heaven or hell holds.

EUSEBIO URBAN.

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All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of him who draws the carriage.

GET YOUR LUGGAGE READY

ONE night I seemed to see a great and populous country. It teemed with life and wealth, yet no sound, no motion arose from it. It was a petrified land. Rich harvests turned the earth to gold, but no reapers came forth. Fruits of the purple, the rose, and every splendid hue, weighted the orchard boughs, but not a hand was raised to pluck them. The flowers shone unseen; the dead air could not woo forth their perfume. The waters had no song; the birds, no flight; the clouds, no rain; the sun, no beams in that leaden atmosphere. The march of the seasons was arrested. Never was land more fertile, more beautiful. It needed but the heart and hand of man to continue its prosperity. High mountains, too, were there, where the gods abode, hovering so near to men that I cried aloud, to see these divine opportunities neglected or forgotten.

Pondering upon a sight so mournful, I saw that the inhabitants of this country had all a strange kind of mental atrophy which annulled all efforts, frustrated every activity. Surrounded by everything which could secure usefulness, happiness, and the fullest development of their natures, they did not know how to set about securing these ends. Their minds were under a spell. In an intellectual darkness, they were dimly conscious of their wretched condition, and called to some one to come and remove the torpor of their minds, to tell them how they might enter into this splendid Life and possess it. At times they did what work they must, then sank into quiescence again, while the glory of life seemed to taunt and mock them. In truth it did not do this. These glorious opportunities were there to urge them on, but could not rouse them.

The anguish of this paralyzed and waiting multitude was so great, that I too began to share their pain and their expectancy as I looked on, and I called aloud anxiously, "Will no one come to help them?"

Some unseen person promptly answered me, "Helpers have already set out for this country, which is called 'The Future.'" "Will they soon arrive?" I asked. My informant replied. "Look, and judge for yourself."

At this I felt impelled to turn around and saw great masses of clouds breaking open before me, making a rift through which I could look. The view was so misty that I understood in some mystic way, that I was about to see into the Past. What I perceived was a long railway train starting on a journey to some very distant point. There was great confusion about it. Some of the travelers were leaning out of the slowly moving train, gesticulating towards huge piles of luggage left behind. Others were endeavoring to turn the air brakes. Some had reached the engineer, and were arguing briskly, urging him to stop the train or to go back. Many others slept, and by their feverish rest I could see that their thoughts

were on the baggage vans. Meanwhile, back in the station, were travelers absorbed in checking and marking their luggage, or wandering about half dazed, trying to find their personal effects, and to keep them distinct from the rest. People were arriving, too, in a constant stream, belated by their overladen coaches, and, in far homes, I saw others bustling hither and thither, packing and repacking. All of these were so absorbed that they did not know the hour was past, or that the train had set out for the land where they were all bound to go.

"Are these the helpers?" I asked. My unseen friend said that they were.

"But why do they not make haste when they are so sorely needed?"

"You see they are willing enough, but their luggage detains them."

"Could they not do with less, and arrange it more rapidly! or even discard much of it, which seems to consist of mere personal luxuries fostered by habit?"

"They could indeed, but this they do not understand."

"And, will no one reach that unfortunate country?" I exclaimed.

"Yes; the train will arrive there, but it will be detained. And many of the people in it are so harassed by their thoughts of their lost or strayed luggage, or so preoccupied in keeping it together, that they will not be able to set to work promptly on their arrival. Thus they will not resist the peculiar lethargy which prevails in that land, and they will swell the numbers of the unfortunates, who, like them, originally started out hoping to reach a happy Future."

"Are there, then, no persons of clear and unencumbered minds," I asked, "who can be of use to the rest?"

"Indeed there are, but they are comparatively few, and are swallowed up in that great crowd. There in the train you may see an occasional traveller who is tranquil, whose thought is fixed upon his errand. There are such also in the city, and they are putting forth all their strength. Who shall say whether they can do much? What is needed is that the great majority of men should try with one accord to think of The Future, to prepare to enlighten and free it. They cannot attain the great prizes here and now, but they can do something; they can prepare for it."

This person spoke so quietly that his even tones annoyed me. "And you," said I, "you appear to take all this suffering and possible disaster very coolly. To think that a land so fertile, one with such glorious, and even divine possibilities through its Humanity, should lie extinguished in darkness because of the delays of these travellers! It is enough to break any heart."

"I am not 'cool,' as you say, but I am calm. I am obliged to be, for I have seen this sight for many an age; I shall see it for many more. In all time the sad lesson repeats itself, and Time is one. What you have seen is what takes place age after age. The waiting

races are always delayed by the impediments of those who start out to reinforce and to help them."

"And what luggage is this that they cherish so much as to let it stand between them and their highest impulses, their noblest endeavor? Why do they not cast it aside?"

"This luggage is needed by every traveller if he would not arrive in that distant country utterly helpless, to be himself a burden to the community. Know the truth, my friend. This luggage which every man and woman carries is *the mind*. They cannot cast it away. What they need to do is to set it in order; to cast all useless thoughts and energies, all personal mental habits aside; to concentrate and strengthen it; above all, to hold it in readiness to start on the journey to the Future, so that when they arrive they may at once begin, without loss of time, to redeem and lift that Age. Then the journey will be more swiftly made; then there will be no such long waits between stations, no obstructing of trains. I and my companions are set apart to endeavor to teach men this; we learned it through our own experience many cycles ago. And in your age as in ours, men are slow to comprehend; slower even for in yours the darkness has settled down like a pall. Yet Hope is the very nature of Life itself, and hence, we hope."

He said no more to me then, and the vision came to an end. I saw how true was all that I had heard, and each day bears fresh witness to its truth.

The mind of man is a tremendous Force, capable of engendering many energies, of various grades, correlating and interacting. The highest of these act on every plane; the lower upon lower planes only, where they tend to beget obstructive consequences by, so to say, intensifying or thickening—condensing too—the one substance of which all things are made, into gross and material strata, which greatly impede the entrance of higher force to our plane, and isolate it and us by degrees.

What then determines the quality of a mental energy, so that it becomes of a "high" or "low" order? Its relation to the personal self determines it. The free will of man has its point of departure in the mind. He can generate thoughts which, by concentration upon or relation to the self, tend to contract his sphere (in more senses than one), and to preserve his Being intact in the life of separateness. Or he can evolve thoughts which relate to the whole world; which flow out towards the Unity, and, by their action and interaction upon the highest forces, a part of which they are, tend to dissolve his personal life as such, to unite all his principles to their cosmic sources, and reveal the beauty, power, and wisdom of Being to his enraptured soul.

Very many of us can find but little work to do for Humanity, though work is here, pressing enough, tangible enough. But circumstances of iron control many, and these are Karma. What each one can do, however, is to purify the mind, and to develop in it affinities, such tendencies and habits, as may be drawn up into the

higher nature. These, then, will guide our soul's course after death, leading the Ego to reincarnate there where it can at once begin the work for Humanity. The predominating love spun by our nature is like the stray end of the spider's web, cast loose upon the air. It reaches across to some branch to which it instantly adheres, and upon it the Ego, the mysterious weaver of life's web, crosses the gulf we call Death, and finds each life in strict continuity with the preceding one.

These few thoughts cannot be better illustrated, or more fitly closed, than by an extract from a private letter written by H. P. Blavatsky:

"What is this about the soldier not being free? Of course no soldier can be free to move about his physical body wherever he likes. But what has the esoteric teaching to do with the *outward man?* A soldier may be stuck to his sentry-box like a barnacle to its ship, and the soldier's Ego be free to go where it likes, and think what it likes best. * * * No man is required to carry a burden heavier than he can bear, nor do more than it is possible for him to do. * * * If one cannot, owing to circumstances or his position in life, become a full adept in this existence, let him prepare his mental luggage for the next, so as to be ready at the first call, when he is once more reborn. What one has to do before he pledges himself irretrievably, is to probe one's nature to the bottom, for self-discipline is based on self knowledge. It is said somewhere that self-discipline often leads one to a state of self-confidence which becomes vanity and pride in the long run. I say, fool is the man who says so. This may happen only when our motives are of a worldly character, or selfish. Otherwise, self-confidence is the first step to that kind of WILL which will make a mountain move.

> 'To thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou cans't not then be false to any man.'

"The question is whether Polonius meant this for worldly wisdom, or for occult knowledge; and, by 'own self,' the *false* Ego (the terrestial personality), or that spark in us which is but the reflection of the One Universal Ego."

It appears, then, that our best course of action is to get our mental luggage ready, and especially to free it from the thought of self, or the "terrestial personality" living in a dream of separation.

J. CAMPBELL VER PLANCK.

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"O man thou thinkest that thou art alone; and actest as thou likest. Thou dost not perceive the eternal Soul that dwells within thy breast. Whatever is done by thee *It* sees and notes it all. This Soul is its own witness; and is its own refuge. It is the supreme eternal witness of man. Do not offend it." —*Maha-bharata, I.*

CONVERSATIONS ON OCCULTISM

THE KALI YUGA—THE PRESENT AGE

Student.—I am very much puzzled about the present age. Some theosophists seem to abhor it as if wishing to be taken away from it altogether, inveighing against modern inventions such as the telegraph, railways, machinery, and the like, and bewailing the disappearance of former civilizations. Others take a different view, insisting that this is a better time than any other, and hailing modern methods as the best. Tell me, please, which of these is right, or, if both are wrong, what ought we to know about the age we live in?

Sage.—The teachers of Truth know all about this age. But they do not mistake the present century for the whole cycle. The older times of European history, for example, when might was right and when darkness prevailed over Western nations, was as much a part of this age, from the standpoint of the Masters, as is the present hour, for the Yuga—to use a sanskrit word—in which we are now had begun many thousands of years before. And during that period of European darkness, although this Yuga had already begun, there was much light, learning, and civilization in India and China. The meaning of the words "present age" must therefore be extended over a far greater period than is at present assigned. In fact, modern science has reached no definite conclusion yet as to what should properly be called "an age," and the truth of the Eastern doctrine is denied. Hence we find writers speaking of the "Golden Age," and so on, whereas they are only parts of the real age that began so far back that modern archaeologists deny it altogether.

Student.—What is the sanskrit name for this age, and what is its meaning?

Sage.—The sanskrit is "Kali," which added to Yuga gives us "Kali-Yuga." The meaning of it is "Dark Age." Its approach was known to the ancients, its characteristics are described in the Indian poem "The Mahabharata." As I said that it takes in an immense period of the glorious part of Indian history, there is no chance for any one to be jealous and to say that we are comparing the present hour with that wonderful division of Indian development.

Student.—What are the characteristics to which you refer, by which *Kali-Yuga* may be known?

Sage.—As its name implies, darkness is the chief. This of course is not deducible by comparing today with 800 A. D., for this would be no comparison at all. The present century is certainly

ahead of the middle ages, but as compared with the preceding Yuga it is dark. To the Occultist, material advancement is not of the quality of light, and he finds no proof of progress in merely mechanical contrivances that give comfort to a few of the human family while the many are in misery. For the darkness he would have to point but to one nation, even the great American Republic. Here he sees a mere extension of the habits and life of the Europe from which it sprang; here a great experiment with entirely new conditions and material was tried; here for many years very little poverty was known; but here today there is as much grinding poverty as anywhere, and as large a criminal class with corresponding prisons as in Europe, and more than in India. Again, the great thirst for riches and material betterment, while spiritual life is to a great extent ignored, is regarded by us as darkness. The great conflict already begun between the wealthy classes and the poorer is a sign of darkness. Were spiritual light prevalent the rich and the poor would still be with us, for Karma cannot be blotted out, but the poor would know how to accept their lot and the rich how to improve the poor; now, on the contrary, the rich wonder why the poor do not go to the poorhouse, meanwhile seeking in the laws for cures for strikes and socialism, and the poor continually growl at fate and their supposed oppressors. All this is of the quality of spiritual darkness.

Student.—Is it wise to inquire as to the periods when the cycle changes, and to speculate on the great astronomical or other changes that herald a turn?

Sage.—It is not. There is an old saying that the gods are jealous about these things, not wishing mortals to know them. We may analyze the age, but it is better not to attempt to fix the hour of a change of cycle. Besides that, you will be unable to settle it, because a cycle does not begin on a day or year clear of any other cycle; they interblend, so that, although the wheel of one period is still turning, the initial point of another has already arrived.

Student.—Are these some of the reasons why Mr. Sinnett was not given certain definite periods of years about which he asked?

Sage.—Yes.

Student.—Has the age in which one lives any effect on the student; and what is it?

Sage.—It has effect on every one, but the student after passing along in his development feels the effect more than the ordinary man. Were it otherwise, the sincere and aspiring students all over the world would advance at once to those heights towards which they strive. It takes a very strong soul to hold back the age's heavy hand, and it is all the more difficult because that influence, being a part of the student's larger life, is not so well understood by him. It operates in the same way as a structural defect in a vessel. All the inner as well as the outer fibre of the man is the

result of the long centuries of earthly lives lived here by his ancestors. These sow seeds of thought and physical tendencies in a way that you cannot comprehend. All those tendencies affect him. Many powers once possessed are hidden so deep as to be unseen, and he struggles against obstacles constructed ages ago. Further yet are the peculiar alternations brought about in the astral world. It, being at once a photographic plate, so to say, and also a reflector, has become the keeper of the mistakes of ages past which it continually reflects upon us from a plane to which most of us are strangers.

In that sense therefore, free as we suppose ourselves, we are walking about completely hypnotized by the past, acting blindly under the suggestions thus cast upon us.

Student.—Was that why Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do?*"

Sage.—That was one meaning. In one aspect they acted blindly, impelled by the age, thinking they were right.

Regarding these astral alterations, you will remember how in the time of Julian the seers reported that they could see the gods, but they were decaying, some headless, others flaccid, others minus limbs, and all appearing weak. The reverence for these ideals was departing, and their astral pictures had already begun to fade.

Student.—What mitigation is there about this age? Is there nothing at all to relieve the picture?

Sage.—There is one thing peculiar to the present *Kali-Yuga* that may be used by the Student. All causes now bring about their effects much more rapidly than in any other or better age. A sincere lover of the race can accomplish more in three incarnations under Kali-Yuga's reign than he could in a much greater number in any other age. Thus by bearing all the manifold troubles of this Age and steadily triumphing, the object of his efforts will be more quickly realized, for, while the obstacles seem great, the powers to be invoked can be reached more quickly.

Student.—Even if this is, spiritually considered, a Dark Age, is it not in part redeemed by the increasing triumphs of mind over matter, and by the effects of science in mitigating human ills, such as the causes of disease, disease itself, cruelty, intolerance, bad laws, etc.?

Student.—Admitting all you say, are not we, as Theosophists, and which can only be eradicated by spiritual living.

Sage.—Yes, these are mitigations of the darkness in just the same way that a lamp gives some light at night but does not restore daylight. In this age there are great triumphs of science, but they are nearly all directed to *effects* and do not take away the *causes* of the evils. Great strides have been made in the arts and in cure of diseases, but in the future, as the flower of our civilization unfolds, new diseases will arise and more strange disorders will be known, springing from causes that lie deep in the minds of men

to welcome every discovery of truth in any field, especially such truth as lessens suffering or enlarges the moral sense?

Sage.—That is our duty. All truths discovered must be parts of the one Absolute Truth, and so much added to the sum of our outer knowledge. There will always be a large number of men who seek for these parts of truth, and others who try to alleviate present human misery.

They each do a great and appointed work that no true Theosophist should ignore. And it is also the duty of the latter to make similar efforts when possible, for Theosophy is a dead thing if it is not turned into the life. At the same time, no one of us may be the judge of just how much or how little our brother is doing in that direction. If he does all that he can and knows how to do, he does his whole present duty.

Student.—I fear that a hostile attitude by Occult teachers towards the learning and philanthropy of the time may arouse prejudice against Theosophy and Occultism, and needlessly impede the spread of Truth. May it not be so?

Sage.—The real Occult Teachers have no hostile attitude toward these things. If some persons, who like theosophy and try to spread it, take such a position, they do not thereby alter the one assumed by the real Teachers who work with all classes of men and use every possible instrument for good. But at the same time we have found that an excess of the technical and special knowledge of the day very often acts to prevent men from apprehending the truth.

Student.—Are there any causes, other than the spread of Theosophy, which may operate to reverse the present drift towards materialism?

Sage.—The spread of the knowledge of the laws of Karma and Reincarnation and of a belief in the absolute spiritual unity of all beings will alone prevent this drift. The cycle must, however, run its course, and until that is ended all beneficial causes will of necessity act slowly and not to the extent they would in a brighter age. As each student *lives* a better life and by his example imprints upon the astral light the picture of a higher aspiration acted in the world, he *thus aids souls of advanced development to descend from other spheres* where the cycles are so dark that they can no longer stay there.

Student.—Accept my thanks for your instruction.

Sage.—May you reach the terrace of enlightenment.

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"These sons belong to me; this wealth belongs to me:" with such thoughts is a fool tormented. He himself does not belong to himself, much less sons and wealth.—*Buddhaghosha Parables.*

TO ASPIRANTS FOR CHELASHIP

SINCERE interest in Theosophic truth is often followed by sincere aspiration after Theosophic life, and the question continually recurs, What are the conditions and the steps to chelaship;* to whom should application be made; how is the aspirant to know that it has been granted?

As to the conditions and the discipline of chelaship, not a little has been disclosed in *The Theosophist, Man, Esoteric Buddhism,* and other works upon Theosophy; and some of the qualifications, difficulties, and dangers have been very explicitly set forth by Madame Blavatsky in her article upon "Theosophical Mahatmas" in the PATH of December, 1886. To every one cherishing even a vague desire for closer relations to the system of development through which Masters are produced, the thoughtful study of this article is earnestly commended. It will clear the ground of several misconceptions, deepen the sense of the seriousness of such an effort, and excite a healthy self-distrust which is better before than after the gate has been passed.

It is entirely possible, however, that the searching of desire and strength incited by that article may only convince more strongly of sincerity, and that not a few readers may emerge from it with a richer purpose and a deeper resolve. Even where there is not a distinct intention to reach chelaship, there may be an eager yearning for greater nearness to the Masters, for some definite assurance of guidance and of help. In either of these cases the question at once arises before the aspirant, Who is to receive the application, and how is its acceptance to be signified?

The very natural, indeed the instinctive, step of such an aspirant is to write to an officer of the Theosophical Society. None the less is this a mistake. For the Theosophical Society is an *exoteric* body, the Lodge of Masters wholly *esoteric*. The former is a voluntary group of inquirers and philanthropists, with avowed aims, a printed Constitution, and published officers, and, moreover, expressly disavowing any power, as a Society, to communicate with Masters; the latter is an Occult Lodge, of whose address, members, processes, functions, nothing is known. It follows, therefore, that there is no person, no place, no address, to which an aspirant may appeal.

Let it be supposed, however, that such an inquiry is preferred to a person advanced in Occult study, versed in its methods and tests and qualifications. Assuredly his reply would be directly to this effect:—

"If you were now fitted to be an accepted chela, you would of yourself know how, where, and to whom to apply. For the

* Chelaship means discipleship.

becoming a chela *in reality* consists in the evolution or development of certain spiritual principles latent in every man, and in great measure unknown to your present consciousness. Until these principles are to some degree consciously evolved by you, you are not in practical possession of the means of acquiring the first rudiments of that knowledge which now seems to you so desirable. Whether it is desired by your mind or by your heart is still another important question, not to be solved by anyone who has not yet the clew to Self.

It is true that these qualities can be developed (or forced) by the aid of an Adept. And most applicants for chelaship are actuated by a desire to receive instructions directly from the Masters. They do not ask themselves what they have done to merit a privilege so rare. Nor do they consider that, all Adepts being servants of the Law of Karma, it must follow that, did the applicant now merit their visible aid, he would already possess it and could not be in search of it. The indications of the fulfillment of the Law are, in fact, the partial unfolding of those faculties above referred to.

You must, then, reach a point other than that where you now stand, before you can even ask to be taken as a chela on probation. All candidates enter the unseen Lodge in this manner, and it is governed by Laws containing within themselves their own fulfillment and not requiring any officers whatever. Nor must you imagine that such a probationer is one who works under constant and known direction of either an Adept or another chela. On the contrary, he is tried and tested for at least seven years, and perhaps many more, before the point is reached when he is either accepted (and prepared for the first of a series of initiations often covering several incarnations), or rejected. And this rejection is not by any body of men just as they incline, but is the natural rejection by Nature. The probationer may or may not hear from his Teacher during this preliminary period; more often he does not hear. He may be finally rejected and not know it, just as some men have been on probation and have not known it until they suddenly found themselves accepted. Such men are those self-developed persons who have reached that point in the natural order after many incarnations, where their expanded faculties have entitled them to an entrance into the Hall of Learning or the spiritual Lodge beyond. And all I say of men applies equally to women.

When any one is regularly accepted as a chela on probation, the first and only order he receives (for the present) is to work unselfishly for humanity—sometimes aiding and aided by some older chela—*while striving to get rid of the strength of the personal idea.* The ways of doing this are left to his own intuition entirely, inasmuch as the object is to develop that *intuition* and to bring him to *self-knowledge.* It is his having these powers in some degree that leads to his acceptance as a probationer, so that it is more than probable that you have them not yet save as latent pos-

sibilities. In order to have in his turn any title to help, he must work for others, but that must not be his motive for working. He who does not feel irresistibly impelled to serve the Race, whether he himself fails or not, is bound fast by his own personality and cannot progress until he has learned that *the race is himself* and not that body which he now occupies. The ground of this necessity for a pure motive was recently stated in *Lucifer* to be that 'unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it. The powers and forces of animal nature can be equally used by the selfish and revengeful as by the unselfish and all-forgiving; the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart.'

It may be stated, however, that even those natural forces cannot be discovered by any man who has not obtained the power of getting rid of his personality in some degree. That an emotional desire to help others does not imply this freedom from personality may be seen by the fact that, if you were now perfected in unselfishness in the *real* sense, you would have a conscious existence separate from that of the body and would be able to quit the body at will: in other words, to be free from all sense of self is to be an Adept, for the limitations of self inhibit progress.

Hear also the words of the Master, taken from Sinnett's *The Occult World*. 'Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of a desire for self-benefit or a tendency to do injustice, even when these exist unconsciously to himself.'

While setting forth these facts, as well as the dangers and difficulties—both those set ones appointed by the laws of the Lodge and the more innumerable ones adjudged by Karma and hastened by the efforts of the neophyte, it should also be stated that the Masters desire to deter no man from entering the path. They are well aware, however, from the repeated trials and records of centuries, and from their knowledge of our racial difficulties, how few are the persons who have any clue to their own real nature, which is the foe they attempt to conquer the moment they become pupils of the occult. Hence They endeavor, so far as Karma permits, to hold unfit individuals back from rash ventures the results of which would recoil upon their unbalanced lives and drive them to despair. The powers of evil, inadequately defied by the ignorant man, revenge themselves upon him as well as upon his friends, and not upon those who are above their reach. Although these powers are not hideous objective shapes coming in tangible ways, they are none the less real and dangerous. Their descent in such instances cannot be prevented; *it is Karma.*

To lose all sense of self, then, implies the loss of all that ordinary men most value in themselves. It therefore behooves you to seriously consider these points:—

1st. What is your motive in desiring to be a chela? You think that motive is well known to you, whereas it is hidden deep within you, and by that hidden motive you will be judged. It has flared up from unseen regions upon men sure of themselves, has belched out in some lurid thought or deed of which they esteemed themselves incapable, and has overthrown their life or reason. Therefore test yourself ere Karma tests you.

2d. What the place and duties of a true neophyte are.

When you have seriously considered both for 21 days, you may, if your desire remains firm, take a certain course open to you. It is this.

Although you do not now know where you can offer yourself to Masters themselves as a chela on probation, yet, in forming that desire in your heart and in re-affirming it (if you do) after due consideration of these points, you have then to some extent called upon the Law, and it is within your power to constitute yourself a disciple, so far as in you lies, through the purity of your motive and effort *if both are sufficiently sustained.* No one can fix a period when this effort will bear fruit, and, if your patience and faith are not strong enough to bear you through an *unlimited* (so far as you know) period of unselfish work for humanity, you had better resign your present fancy, for it is then no more than that. But if otherwise, you are to work for the spiritual enlightenment of Humanity in and through the Theosophical Society (which much needs such laborers), and in all other modes and planes as you best can, remembering the word of Masters: 'He who does what he can and all that he can, and all that he knows how to do, does enough for us.' This task includes that of divesting yourself of all personality through interior effort, because that work, if done in the right spirit, is even more important to the race than any outward work we can do. Living as you now are, on the outward plane chiefly, your work is due there and is to be done there until your growth shall fit you to pass away from it altogether.

In following this course you work towards a fixed point under observation,—as is, indeed, the whole Theosophic body, which is now *as a body,* a chela of Masters,—but specialized from other members in the sense that your definite aim and trust are understood and taken into consideration by the unseen Founders and the Law. The Theosophical Society then stands to you, for the time being, as any older chela might who was appointed for you to aid and to work under. *You are not,* understand, a chela on probation, since no one without authority can confer or announce such a privilege. But if you succeed in lifting yourself and others spiritually, it will be known, *no matter what the external silence may seem to be,* and you will receive your full dues from Those who are honest debtors and ministers of the Just and Perfect Law. You must be ready to work, to wait, and to aspire in *silence,* just as all do who have fixed their eyes on this goal. Remember that your truest adviser is to be found, and constantly sought, *within*

yourself. Only by experience can you learn to know its voice from that of natural instinct or mere logic, and strengthen this power, by virtue of which the Masters have become what They are.

Your choice or rejection of this course is the first test of yourself. Others will follow, whether you are aware of them or not, for the first and only right of the neophyte is—*to be tried*. Hence silence and sorrow follow his acceptance instead of the offer of prompt aid for which he looks. Yet even that shall not be wanting; those trials and reverses will come only from the Law to which you have appealed."

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MEDITATION AND ACTION

IT is the fashion now-a-days, with those who write about ideas which lie beyond the world of sense, to express opinion in very guarded terms. In contradistinction to the old priestly dogmatism, it has of late years been considered "good form" to handle these subjects in so tentative a manner as almost to imply agnosticism. It is a frame of mind that has eminently suited the time, and was a worthy set-off to the old superstitious intolerance.

But when a new revelation is bursting on the souls of men, when the error and the ignorance, alike begotten of the ancient superstition and the modern incredulity, are so powerful as to defy all but the best aimed shafts of the most cogent Reason, the tentative hesitation of the groper after Truth is no longer an appropriate attitude.

We have no desire to soar into the lofty region of metaphysics, where we are sure to be met with the assertion that truth about these ultimate realities never has been and never can be formulated or uttered by man. Let us content ourselves with the humbler elevation of practical ethics, and acknowledge that Truth is a relative term. To quote from a remarkable letter lately addressed to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, "A religion is true in proportion as it supplies the spiritual, moral, and intellectual needs of the time, and helps the development of mankind in these respects. It is false in proportion as it hinders that development, and offends the spiritual, moral, and intellectual portion of man's nature. And the transcendentally spiritual ideas of the ruling powers of the Universe entertained by an Oriental sage would be as false a religion for the African savage as the groveling fetishism of the latter would be for the sage, although both views must necessarily be true in degree, for both represent the highest ideas attainable

by the respective individuals of the same cosmic-spiritual facts, which can never be known in their reality by man while he remains but man."

With this prelude let us attempt to form some just estimate of a remarkable and interesting book which has recently been published, *Scientific Religion*, by Laurence Oliphant. It is certainly in marked contrast to the style of writing commented on in the opening paragraph,—indeed it is refreshing to listen to such earnest utterances on subjects of the deepest interest. While expressing his sincerest attachment to the true Christian faith, no writer attacking the anti-Christian creeds of the churches could demolish the orthodox conceptions with more powerful or crushing arguments. The 22d chapter, which deals with the interpretation of part of the Book of Revelation, is one which the orthodox would do well to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest." His remarks throughout the volume about the orthodox science of the day (for there is now an orthodoxy in this also!) are equally admirable. The following is a specimen. "But a blind belief in the superficial senses is as unsafe a guide to truth as a blind belief in a book. Science is as mole-eyed as theology, and yet to one or the other the whole civilized world trusts for enlightenment. No wonder that these two sets of blind guides, leading their blind followers, should stumble against each other in the dark and fight furiously."

The new vital impulses descending on man are then dealt with. They are supposed to emanate from those inhabiting the Unseen Universe. Whatever opinions may be held on this subject—and opinion is today in a state of flux—the following may certainly be called an ingenious explanation. "Where there is scepticism in the human pneuma or inmost thought of the man, antipathetic atomic combinations are formed in his two external dielectrics, and interpose a hostile atomic element which encompasses the medium, and forms a barrier that the psychic force of the spiritual agent cannot penetrate. It is for this reason that physical manifestations are successful just in proportion as there is a strong faith-sentiment in the spectators, whose external dielectrics are then co-operating with the spiritual agent."

The remarks on the discoveries claimed by Mr. Keely too are so interesting as to deserve reproduction. "Mr. Keely has discovered that such a change can be effected by vibration, in the atoms of which the atmosphere is composed, that what he terms 'atmospheric disintegration' can be produced, which has the effect of liberating a subtle essence, the nature of which has still to be determined, and which he believes to be 'inter-atomic.' The energy it possesses is so great that it exercises a pressure of 25,000 lbs. to the square inch, and, in the engine which he has just constructed for traction purposes, develops a force of 250 horse-power. All this is achieved without the introduction of any extraneous motive power, the whole apparatus being so constructed that the liberation of this tremendous agency from its atmospheric prison-house can be effected by the

vibrations produced by a tuning-fork. Those who are sufficiently unprejudiced to connect the bearings of this discovery, of what must be dynaspheric force, with phenomena which have hitherto been regarded as supernatural by the ignorant, will perceive how rapidly we are bridging over the chasm which has always divided the seen from the unseen, and obliterating the distinction between what has erroneously been called matter, and what has no less erroneously been called spirit." Further on in the book it is significantly pointed out that this dynaspheric force with which Mr. Keely can operate on external substance is synonymous with the inter-atomic energy that produces the phenomena of hypnotism, telepathy, mediumship, and all such abnormal manifestations.

While differing in some points to a marked degree from the recognized theosophic teachings, the author nevertheless demonstrates that the source from which he has drawn his inspiration is conscious of many of the occult facts,—for instance, the androgynous or bisexual nature of primeval man; the highly attenuated character of matter which composed his frame, compared with the fleshly covering we now wear; the esoteric meaning hidden from the vulgar gaze in the Bible as well as in the Scriptures of all religions, and the consequent necessity of initiation in the mysteries: the mistaken notion of the popular mind as to the fundamental difference between spirit and matter; but it is needless to enumerate them further.

We now come to the great subject of which the whole book is a gospel,—the sympneumatic impulse, the descent of the Divine Feminine. Taken in the widest sense, the author's inspiration appeals to our highest reason, and we cannot but give approval to the general proposition that the far-off regeneration of the race will lie (amongst other things) in the reversion to the bisexual type of our prehistoric spiritual ancestors,—in other words, in the absolute quenching of the principle of lust, the double-faced goddess today worshiped, though in varying degrees, by all Humanity—by the votaries alike of marriage and of free-love. This will be an unpalatable way of stating the truth to many, for it is a view from a light which naturally seems to dwarf the difference between the virtuous world and those whom the virtuous world avoids touching with the hem of its garment.

But while assenting to the general proposition, there are details in the working out of the idea which do not appeal to our sense of truth. Writing in chapter 20 of one who is pursuing the upward path, he says, "She will know—not because it is to be found in the Bible—not because her reason suggests its truth, but because her physical organism forces the facts upon her, that she is the feminine half of a two-fold being, and that her completion consists in union with her masculine completement." And again in chapter 21, interpreting extracts from the Kabbalah, he refers to the sympneumatic descent, "for it will result in the union on earth of the halves hitherto divided, whereby man will regain his lost

condition." This is no new idea either. Without going back to Plato (and we should probably err in ascribing to his deeply-veiled utterance the meaning that the words might naturally seem to imply), we find it unmistakably expressed in "Jocelyn," that touching story of Lamartine's, in the stanza which begins—

"Mon coeur me l'avait dit: toute âme est soeur d'une âme;
Dieu les créa par couples et les fit homme ou femme;
Le monde peut en vain un temps les séparer,
Leur destin tôt ou tard est de se rencontrer."

The completion of the at-present incomplete nature of man or woman by an ideal union must to many be a very fascinating thought, but instead of its being as it here purports to be, the explanation of the mystery of the differentiation of sex, is it not rather a perversion of the truth, the truth being that both man and woman have within each one the potency of both sexes, and in this consists their true equality,—in other words, the Soul is bisexual, and is therefore capable of assuming and wearing either the male or the female form, and that its true apotheosis consists in its assertion of and its reversion to its real nature and Divine source.

Much that is written in this section of the book on the subject of woman's mission is admirable. Though the author is severe on the colleges for the higher education of women, which, he says, are "attractive to a certain class of the sex, but which are nurseries of hybrids which turn out an inferior species of man-woman," yet, as he truly points out, the degree in which they (women) compete, with more or less success, with men in the intellectual and executive battles of life is the degree to which they stunt and destroy their own higher faculties.

Of the truth of his inspiration generally, what shall we say? Each man must judge according to his own light which opinion and belief are our guides, and before we have risen to the heights necessary for directly cognising these facts of the Unseen Universe. While leaving those who are able to do so to deal critically with the detailed statements, and to discriminate between the interpretations of symbols and passages, many of which appear to be far-fetched, it seems to us generally that, while the learned and able author has received shreds and fragments of transcendental truth from the Astral World, the knowledge of the primary fact is wanting which would have been capable of discriminating between the teachings and of welding them all into one homogeneous whole,—we mean the doctrine of re-incarnation and the law of Karma, facts which are recognized as the basis of all the great Oriental religions, and which it is the shame and loss alike of Christendom and of Islam to have generally ignored, though traces of the truth are still to be found in the scriptures of the former, and though it is secretly acknowledged by the mystical followers of the latter.

The author also suggests that the attainment of a perfect human

state by man while still he bears the body is a realizable possibility. A whole chapter is devoted to the subject of the formation of households which are gradually to realize this perfect state. But let the author speak for himself, though of course no short extract in this or on any other case can do full justice to the gradually elaborated idea of the author in his own work. "For as he labours thus side by side with his fellowmen, tilling, perhaps, the land and ploughing deep furrows into his own soul, which are destined in good time to bring forth an abundant crop, he perceives that he is indeed laying the foundations of a reconstructed society; and a vista opens out to his charmed gaze of co-operative industries, harmonious communities, and a political system in which liberty, equality, and fraternity shall develop under the aegis of absolute authority, and in association with a hierarchy composed of such different degrees of rank as correspond to their fitness to enjoy it."

It must necessarily be with regret that criticism is allowed finally to replace approval of a book which contains so much that is excellent, and the lessons in which are so badly needed by this self-satisfied and self-vaulting age of ignorance and error. But the unwarranted optimism implied in the above calls for comment; and, besides, there is an apparently wilful misunderstanding throughout the volume of some of the deepest and most occult truths, which recalls a similar though much less flagrant example of misunderstanding, viz; the exaltation of woman as the crown of the universe by the late Mrs. A. Kingsford in her and Mr. Maitland's work, *The Perfect Way,* or *the Finding of Christ.* If it is fair thus to cite a single blemish of such exalted inspiration and remarkable value as the one just named, it may still stand as an example of the error which all psychics are specially liable to, who trust to "spirit-guides" apart from the true intuition of the well-balanced nature, as well as from the ancient traditions of revealed authority.

It is the Utopia of every dreaming Socialist to found a Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, though his means of attaining it may be somewhat different from the peaceful formation of groups of individuals bent on realizing a higher life; but surely more appreciation of existing facts and possibilities is shown even by the religionists who declare that their kingdom is not of this world!

That our race may and will evolve the perfect state is an occult fact, but that evolution will take countless aeons of time, during which the race will inhabit other and more ethereal planets than the present material world, to correspond with the more ethereal bodies which the race will gradually assume, and it will only be after countless weedings-out, during which the great majority will be left behind to carry on such lives as they are fitted for, that the remnant of elect souls will realize the perfect state of terrestrial being (between which and the perfect state of transcorporeal being there will then be but the thinnest veil), the general conditions of which state render it perfectly impossible for us to make any comparison with the present, for, amongst other changes, the sexual

passion will then be non-existent, for the Humanity of the sixth and great seventh round will have reverted to the androgynous type of their far-off ancestors of the first round, which today is buried in the depths of prehistoric time, while we of the fourth round, who are wallowing in the very nadir of materiality, are naturally removed by the whole diameter of the circle alike from the first and the seventh.

But we now approach the kernel of the whole question. What is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh. Like the sportsman who by the most curious perversion of logic (perhaps not altogether to be wondered at in a bucolic intellect), and glorying in his very shame, defends the brutality of slaughter, or the cruelty of hunting an animal to death, on the ground, forsooth, that the courage of the human animal is thereby fed and increased (as if true courage could not be kept up without brutality!), so the man who has been brought up to Western ways of thinking not only fails to realize the very first axiom of true thought, but, with the perverted idea of his race, glories in *his* very shame, for he exalts action above meditation. This is the idea strongly dwelt on in many passages of the book before us. This is the rift in the lute that spoils all the music.

The Western nations having reached what heights they have through action chiefly, it is no great wonder that their representative sons should bow down before the goddess who has ennobled them, but that one who, like the author of *Scientific Religion,* has received so much true inspiration, should not in this also have been rightly guided, is a problem for psychologists to explain.

The right understanding of meditation and action is the great subject with which the *Bhagavad-Gita*—that holy book—begins and ends. Two quotations on the subject of action will demonstrate its scope and object. The first is from chapter VI.

> "By works the votary doth rise to Saint.
> And Saintship is the ceasing from all works."

The second is from chapter XVIII.

> "Better thine own work is, though done with fault,
> Than doing others' work, ev'n excellently.
> He shall not fall in sin who fronts the task
> Set him by Nature's hand! Let no man leave
> His natural duty, Prince! though it bear blame!
> For every work hath blame, as every flame
> Is wrapped in smoke! Only that man attains
> Perfect surcease of work whose work was wrought
> With mind unfettered, soul wholly subdued,
> Desires forever dead, results renounced."

No ordinary man can escape from action, for, while desire of action remains, action is being done,—if not on the material, still on the mental plane. And again it is written in chapter III, verse 4, "A man does not attain to freedom from action by not engaging in action merely, nor is the perfect state gained by simple abandonment of action."

But it is one thing to perform all actions that duty enjoins,

looking forward to the time when all earthly actions will have been performed, and when duty will no longer call; it is another and very different thing to glory in the action, to blindly imagine that any action we can possibly perform is the "worthy and laudable service" which is required of us.

The sympathetic relief of physical suffering is well; the teaching by which man's mental horizon is widened and man's moral nature is elevated is better. They both form worthy preludes to the higher goal. But best of all is to *become* part of the spiritual pabulum by which Humanity lives, and the very first step on the path that leads to this stupendous result is meditation; in other words, the detachment from all the ephemeral interests of life,—which detachment displays itself by perfect equanimity in good and evil fortune, the centering of all thought on the Supreme, until thought itself drops off and the soul is face to face with Deity.

It will be apparent in the above that the "service of man" is the key note throughout, but the "service of man" and what is more or less accurately described as the "Worship of God" must go hand in hand, until they finally become one and identical. It is this final unity which we desire to bring into prominence. Service on the physical plane is good; service on the mental or psychic plane is better; the altruistic effort involved in both requires the impulse of the higher worship as a goal. But with the culmination of worship comes the culmination of service, for they are merged in one. When the self as we understand it is annihilated, when the soul has been able to endure the transcendent vision of Itself as Deity, when difference no longer exists and the one is merged in the All, the store-house of spiritual energy is thereby replenished, and all Humanity receives an impulse that raises them a step nearer the Divine Union also,—nay further, the Divine impulse after passing through man descends to vivify the lower creation. The whole Universe is thrilled by it!

All are capable of the lower service; many are capable of the higher; few are yet fit for the highest. Each one is bound to serve according to his powers, and, following this law, the service which seems worthiest for the writer, who can certainly lay claim to nothing beyond the singlemindedness of an ardent and aspiring but deeply passion-stained man, is to convince if possible an unbelieving world of the existence of that at once highest service and highest worship, which the religious have materialized and degraded, and which the agnostics ignore.

When it is realized that, for the attainment of true meditation, the whole nature requires to be transformed, the Will begins to make the attempt. Though as Matthew Arnold pithily puts it,

> "Tasks in hours of insight will'd
> Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled,"

it yet seems too much of a miracle to permanently change the nature,

to introduce altruism in the selfish man, or purity in the lustful, let alone humility in the proud, for this last (pride) being an attribute of spirit is necessarily far deeper seated than the surface blemishes of the physical nature. The Poet truly wrote, "Pride is the last infirmity of noble minds;" and, indeed, it can be, and often is, used as a means of ennobling the nature, and purging it of the grosser taints of the body.

This permanent change of nature will not likely be effected in an ordinary man in one life time,—rather will it require the concentrated energy of many life times on the "Great Quest," but the first step toward it must be the recognition of the truth, the realization of the supreme desirability of the state to which true meditation leads, and the knowledge that action impelled by desire in one life can only eventuate in similar action in the next, and that the only wise action to perform is that which looks for no reward, that which is dissociated from all idea of self,—in fact, such action as is preached from beginning to end of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

We often hear it stated that a man is better than his creed, and it is a blessed thing for Humanity that the moral nature is sometimes able to withstand the debasing effect of the dire creeds of the churches, but the aimlessness of even the best moral nature which acts without knowledge must be replaced by the distinct realization of the goal to be aimed at. "The first good level is Right Doctrine;" and till the perverted notion of the worthiness in itself of any earthly act disappears from the mind, and some faint conception of the sublime state we aim at takes its place, no further advance seems possible.

He must indeed be a devotee of a very blind optimism who can contemplate the hideous results of action in this vaunted cilivization, and can still expect that, without a cataclysm in which the whole vile thing shall be swept away, any gradual evolution can bring a reformed state. For he sees around him a fair country blackened and marred by belching furnace-fires and the never-ending grind of machinery, the still more awful tumult of the fevered rush of the competing multitudes, and, worse than all, the continually increasing degradation of the lives of the toilers, with every sign that all these evils are steadily on the increase.

The story of Martha and Mary is a standing protest against our deification of action. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful!" and many other similar sayings of the great Teacher might be quoted, but the churches called after his name, and whose representatives have become as a rule "mere echoes of the world's self-seeking," have been reduced to accept the world's apologetic theory that the teachings of Christ are incapable of practical application,—indeed, as the author of *Scientific Religion* points out, the present state of things in Europe has absolutely made them so.

But though the literal application of Christ's teaching has become an impossibility in the West, there are still spots on the earth's

surface where the fever of the modern life has not yet reached, where the lust of wealth and luxury—the Gods or Demons whom the West worships—has no power to quicken the pulses in many a quiet household, whose inmates have at least inherited from their nobler ancestors a juster appreciation than is met with in the West, of the ephemeral character of life, and a worshiping reverence for those who are capable of true meditation.

If the so-called Christian Churches, instead of steeping their hands in the blood of tortured victims and rivaling Princes in the lust of conquest, had taught the Brotherhood of man that Christ believed in, it would not today have become in practice an unthinkable proposition, and we should not now be looking forward to the possibility of a social catastrophe which is too awful to contemplate. But surely the outcome of our present civilization, the steadily increasing accentuation of both poverty and wealth—which indeed constitutes the source of danger—, makes it apparent that the cup of iniquity is rapidly filling to the brim!

Nay, rather let us avoid adding more than is absolutely enjoined by duty to this fevered rush of existence. Let us remember always that in our true self we are the spectator only and that all action is but the result of the "Qualities;" so let us gradually transcend the "Qualities." And realizing that the Divine inner Self—the goal of our great endeavor—ever abides in the true heaven, "let us in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell."

"Only by Soul itself
"Is soul perceived—when the Soul wills it so!
There shines no light save its own light to show
Itself unto itself!"

"None compasseth
Its joy who is not wholly ceased from sin,
Who dwells not self-controlled, self-centered—calm
Lord of himself! It is not gotten else!
Brahm hath it not to give!"

* * * * * * *

"Meditate!
There shines no light, save the Soul's light, to show!
Save the Soul's light!" PILGRIM.

From the Second Valli of the Katha Upanishad, translated by Edwin Arnold under the title of "The Secret of Death."

(The foregoing article was first printed by Mr. Judge in *The Path* for February and March 1889.)

Every desire is to be abandoned by the Self, but if thou art not able to abandon it, then let the desire be towards freedom, for this is the healing of desire. —*Oriental Department Paper—1987.*

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND H. P. B.

I found them blind, I taught them how to see,
And now they know neither themselves nor me.

The Theosophical Movement, being a spiritual one and continuous, has left its landmarks in the great struggle of humanity. These landmarks are to be found in the successes or failures of those who were attracted by the high ideals presented, and particularly among those whose strong personalities have forced them into prominence. The qualities of leadership are possessed by the few, the great majority are followers in varying degrees, the adulation of whom has but too often intensified the personal defects of the one followed.

A glance at the history of the Theosophical Society shows that many started well, and while the Teacher, H. P. Blavatsky lived, these evidenced both in speech and writing a full accord with the lines laid down by that Teacher. Sad to say, many so starting, have little by little drifted into that state of self-assertion which spells "failure," the final expression of which is the belittling of their Teacher, the denial of the one who brought them the sweet waters of Truth. If there is a failure of the Theosophical Society it rests on such as these.

It is said that comparisons are odorous, yet they are necessary in the establishment of facts, and the present purpose of those responsible for this magazine necessitates the presentation of published writings by the same author at different periods, for the information of its readers, and in order to furnish a basis for right judgment. As a beginning there will be presented a number of reprints of articles from the pen of Mrs. Annie Besant, who stands —in the public eye at least—as the most prominent exponent of Theosophy. A careful perusal of these will explain much that has occurred. The first of these reprints now follows, and, as will be seen, it is preceded by an explanatory note from Mrs. Besant—Eds. *Theosophy*.

(The following article expresses the views of many members of the Theosophical Society, who feel strongly that it is time that some protest should be made against the constant petty criticisms levelled at H. P. B. As co-editor, I put in the article, which has not been submitted to H. P. B., nor will she see it until the magazine is issued; so she is in no sense responsible for its appearance.—ANNIE BESANT.)

On the 17th day of last month, the Theosophical Society completed the first fifteen years of its existence, and can look back

over a youth tempestuous indeed, but marked by continuous growth. When first, in New York, the two "Founders" of the infant Society enrolled their earliest members, a profound sadness must have lain at the heart of the one who realised all that was meant by that primary step. "The last quarter of the century!" Not for the first time had that cry been sounded in the Western World, but all the previous attempts had but stirred the waters and had—failed. Was this nineteenth century effort to pass into Hades with its predecessors, bearing only the wreckage of shattered hopes, of broken forces? Was this dawn to darken into night instead of morning, and leave the twentieth century to grope in darkness with none to guide? Or were there, scattered through the West, enough of the students of the past to awake at the summons from the Orient, students in whose hearts the occult fire was smouldering, waiting but the "breath" to make it burst forth in flame? Only when the knell of the century has sounded will the answer to such questionings be fully heard: still is the lot hidden, save from the eyes that pierce beyond the veil. It "lies on the knees of Osiris," and it will fall thence into the lap of failure or of triumph, as *they* keep faith or break it, who form the working brotherhood of the Theosophical Society.

The seed planted in America has grown there into a tree with widely spreading branches.* In India, the Society quickly made its way, and thanks to the energy, the eloquence, and the devotion of Colonel H. S. Olcott, the co-founder and President, branches sprang up in every direction, the ancient literature was enthusiastically studied, schools were founded where knowledge untainted by Christianity could be gathered by the young, and India, waking from the sleep of centuries, felt herself to be once more a nation, a nation with a mighty past, and with the possibility of a glorious future. While all this rush of new life thrilled along the veins of Hindustan, the heart of that life throbbed steadily on, the fount of the circulating energy, though the limbs and the organising brain were more prominent in the eyes of the world. That heart was H. P. B. Indifferent to the exercise of authority, careless of external show—even to the shocking of those tight-fettered by social conventions—willing to efface herself if thereby her mission might the better prosper, there she was, the source of the occult forces which alone could sustain the Theosophical Society. Ready to prove the reality of those as yet little known powers of Nature, the effects of which are as marvellous to the cultured European as are electrical phenomena to the Central African, she performed experiment after experiment for the instruction of those who personally sought her. But she steadily refused to vulgarise her mission by any kind of general "performance of phenomena," which could only gratify curiosity

*An early draft of the constitution of the T. S. lies before me, and shews that, in its inception, membership of the T. S. involved much heavier obligations than are now required from accepted candidates. The fellowship had three sections and each section had three degrees. For the highest, the conditions were severe, and could only be taken by those ready to devote their whole lives to occultism.

and serve no useful purpose. When urged to "show her powers" merely to convince the general crowd, who cared nothing for Theosophical teaching but only desired to gratify their idle love of the marvellous: when told that thus she might win credence and establish her authority, she merely shrugged her shoulders, and, with the indifference of the trained occultist, answered that they might believe or not as they chose; let them say she was "a fraud;" what did it matter? For the real student she had an inexhaustible patience, willingness to prove, readiness to explain: for the idle curiosity-hunter a careless "Oh, it's nothing! psychological tricks, maya, what you please."

With many of the Brahmins she came into direct collision. Sent to teach to the world at large many of the doctrines which had been jealously preserved as the treasure of a privileged minority, she struck them on their tenderest point, their pride in the possession of knowledge hidden from the vulgar crowd, their sensitive jealousy lest their holiest should be profaned. Knowing that she was speaking truth, they often contradicted her in public, while in private they hotly protested against the desecration of their sanctuaries. Physically a subject race, conquered by the material force of the aggressive West, they retired the more into the strongholds of their intellectual pride, looking with unutterable contempt on the foreigner who could subdue their bodies, but who, in his ignorance of the secrets of Nature, was but a barbarian in their haughty eyes. That he should rule in India was well, since India had forsaken her ancestral wisdom and was unworthy to be free: but that he should catch a glimpse of that mental and spiritual realm of which they were citizens—nay, such intrusion should be resisted to the last, and the very existence of such a realm should be kept secret, lest he should find a gate that might let him in. That this Russian teacher had her knowledge from the sages they reverenced, they were unable to deny: but they resisted her publication of the teachings as their ancestors had resisted the teachings of Gautama, the Buddha. Not for the "common people" were even the crumbs of the "Divine Wisdom."

Nevertheless, despite all, her influence steadily grew, and the Theosophical Society struck its roots far and wide. Then came the bitter and unscrupulous attack of the Christian missionaries in the famous Coulomb forgeries, forgeries some of them so transparent that they could not have deceived an intelligent child, others ingeniously concocted of the half-truths that "are ever the blackest of lies."

And here, I venture to say, a mistake was made, a mistake in tactics as well as a failure in loyalty. An examination held promptly and on the spot proved the falsehood of the calumnious accusations, and exposed the nefarious artifices by which evidences had been fabricated. So far, so good. But then, instead of closing up round the assailed Teacher and defending to the utmost her position

and her honour, the fatal policy was adopted of attempting to minimise her position in the Society, of arguing that the teaching remained impregnable whether the teacher was or was not trustworthy. It was a policy of expediency, not of principle, it being thought wise to ignore attacks rather than to refute them, and to lay stress on the inherent strength of the philosophy rather than to continually vindicate its exponent. Suffering from acute disease, and always too doubtful of her own judgment in mere exoteric matters, in questions of policy and expediency, to trust to it against the advise of men of the world, H. P. B. allowed herself to be put aside, while the Society was exalted at the expense of its Founder, and left it to go its own way in Hindustan. When sufficiently recovered from almost fatal illness, she recommenced her work, but in Europe not in India, confining her activity to the Western World.

The effects of her presence quickly became manifest. Where was the occult heart, there was centred the life of the Society, and in the West, on every side, appeared signs of new vitality. How the Theosophical movement was spread through Western lands it needs not here to relate. The "Theosophical Activities" in every number of *Lucifer* tell the tale so that he who runs may read.

This rapid growth has been due primarily to H. P. B.'s personal presence, secondarily to the formation of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. Into this, those only are admitted who accept H. P. B. as their teacher in Occultism, recognizing her as the messenger of that Brotherhood who are the real Founders of the Theosophical Society. This Section embraces most of the most active workers in the Society, and as they base their activity on their philosophy little of it is wasted in running after false scents. There is a certain fringe of people who come and go, who enter from curiosity and are disgusted when they find only hard work; who seek for "powers" and are angry when they find only self-denial; who enter thinking Occultism an easy and exciting study, and break under the tension to which they find themselves subjected. But the centre of the Section is steadily solidifying, and it encircles H. P. B. with evergrowing trust—founded on lengthening experience—with ever increasing love, gratitude and loyalty.

Now touching the position of H. P. B. to and in the Theosophical Society, the following is a brief exposition of it, as it appears to many of us:

(1) *Either she is a messenger from the Masters, or else she is a fraud.*

From this dilemma there is no escape. If she does not come from Them, bringing their message, doing their work, executing their commission, her whole life is a lie. From beginning to end, she has claimed nothing as her own, everything as from Them. Those who are in daily contact with her, know how she continually refers to their decision, speaks in their name. No third course

is open to us: there are only these alternatives, the mission is either real or fraudulent.

(2) *In either case the Theosophical Society would have had no existence without her.*

The folly of trying to separate the Theosophical Society and H. P. B. lies in this fact. Without H. P. B. no Theosophical Society. All the Westerns who know anything of Theosophy have learned from her or from her pupils. Col. Olcott, as he always recognises, obtained through her his introduction to the work. Save for her, he would be a well-known American Spiritualist, not the President of the Theosophical Society. So with Mr. Sinnett, so with Mr. Judge, so with each and all. Many have obtained independent evidence afterwards, but for all she has been the portal through which they have passed into the occult world. Nor is the fact that the existence of the Theosophical Society is due to her the only proof of the hopelessness of the attempt to rend the twain apart. For just as it owed to her its inception, so now it owes to her its vitality. Where she is, there, evident to all eyes, is the centre of energy: and where she is not physically, there the progress is in proportion to the loyalty shown towards her. Unfair criticism of her, ungenerous carping at her, slackness in defending her against attack from outside, wherever these are found there also quickly follow stagnation, decay, death.

(3) *If she is a fraud, she is a woman of wonderful ability and learning, giving all the credit of these to some persons who do not exist.*

As to the ability and learning, these are not challenged by her enemies. They sometimes say that her knowledge is ill-digested, that she arranges her materials badly, that she is misty, involved, self-contradictory. But that she possesses an extraordinary fund of varied information, bearing on out-of-the-way topics, and obscure philosophies, is admitted on every hand. If she be a fraud, why is she such a fool as to invent imaginary Teachers, fathering on them her knowledge, and so gaining from every side abuse and slander, while she might have gained credit, to say nothing of money, by the simple and natural course of giving out her own as her own? Can anything more insane be imagined than for a Russian woman of noble family, married to a high official, to go out into the world on a wild-goose chase after imaginary Teachers, and having acquired a mass of recondite knowledge at great cost and suffering, to throw away all the credit of acquiring it, to ascribe it to non-existent persons, to face slander, abuse, calumny, instead of utilizing it in a more common way, to remain an exile from her own country, to be poor and despised where she might be wealthy and honoured? If anyone can produce, outside Bedlam, a lunatic more mad than H. P. B. must be if she be a fraud, I should be grateful for the honour of an introduction.

(4) *If H. P. B. is a true messenger, opposition to her is op-*

position to the Masters, she being their only channel to the Western World.

This proposition scarcely needs argument to sustain it: it is self-evident; she alone is in direct and constant communication with the trans-Himalayan Adepts. They chose her, and presumably they can manage their own business. Once accept the philosophy, you must accept her; accept her and you cannot stop short of the full proposition as stated above. And here let me make a suggestion to those who rashly and superficially judge H. P. B., and complain that she is hasty, that she "shuts up" enquirers, that she repels would-be disciples. H. P. B. varies with the people who come to her. To the person who veils mere curiosity under polite forms and false courtesy, she will be abrupt, sharp, repellent. The hostile feeling masked under smiles, finds itself pierced by a keen sarcasm, or knocking itself against a wall of ice. But to the honest enquirer she is patient and gentle to a rare extent, and only her pupils know of a patience that has no limits, a strength that never falters, an insight that never errs. In fact, H. P. B. herself is the test of the members, and when they begin to grumble at her, they would do wisely to analyse themselves. I sometimes think of a test dropped into a solution, precipitating some substance therein contained. "What a horrid liquid it must be so to dirty that beautifully clear fluid," cry the ignorant. If the substance had not been present, it would not have been precipitated by the test, and if enquirers and members are honest, they will find themselves attracted, not repelled, by H. P. B.

(5) *If there are no Masters, the Theosophical Society is an absurdity, and there is no use in keeping it up. But if there are Masters, and H. P. B. is their messenger, and the Theosophical Society their foundation, the Theosophical Society and H. P. B. cannot be separated before the world.*

This is the conclusion of the whole matter, the decision on which must guide our policy. I see on some sides a disposition to temporise, to whittle away the Esoteric Teachings, to hastily twist them into accord with temporary hypotheses of Science, in order to gain a momentary advantage, perchance a fuller hearing. This is not wise. Already some such hypotheses, opposed to occult teachings, have been thrown aside by more advanced scientific thought, and have been replaced by other hypotheses, more nearly approaching the occult views. There is no need to hurry, nor to try to pour the archaic doctrines into new bottles, ere those bottles have been tested. The Secret Teachings have stood many thousands of years, and have been the source from which the stream of progress has flowed. They can venture to stand on their own basis for a few years more, till Science crosses the dividing line it is tentatively approaching with each new discovery.

To the members of the Theosophical Society, I venture to say a word of pleading. But a few years stretch before us ere the century expires, a century whose close coincides well-nigh with the close of a

cycle. As the sands of those years are running through the hour-glass of Time, our opportunities are running with them; it is "a race against time," in a very real sense. If the members care at all for the future of the Society, if they wish to know that the Twentieth Century will see it standing high above the strife of parties, a beacon-light in the darkness for the guiding of men, if they believe in the Teacher who founded it for human service, let them now arouse themselves from slothful indifference, sternly silence all dissensions over petty follies in their ranks, and march shoulder to shoulder for the achievement of the heavy task laid upon their strength and courage. If Theosophy is worth anything, it is worth living for and worth dying for. If it is worth nothing, let it go at once and for all. It is not a thing to play with, it is not a thing to trifle with. Ere 1891 sees its earliest dawning, ere 1890 falls into the grave now a-digging for it, let each Theosophist, and above all let each Occulist, calmly review his position, carefully make his choice, and if that choice be for Theosophy, let him sternly determine that neither open foes nor treacherous friends shall shake his loyalty for all time to come to his great Cause and Leader, which twain are one.

ANNIE BESANT, F. T. S.

(The foregoing is from Lucifer, Vol. VII, for December, 1890.)

As the natural fire, O Arjuna, reduceth fuel to ashes, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all factions to ashes. There is no purifier in this world to be compared to spiritual knowledge; and he who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time.

Bhagavad-Gita—Chap. 4.

Space is the *one eternal thing* that we can most easily imagine, immovable in its abstraction and uninfluenced by either the presence or absence in it of an objective universe.

H. P. Blavatsky—In The Secret Doctrine, Vol. 1, p. 67.

Life we look on as the One Form of Existence, manifesting in what we call Matter; or what, incorrectly separately separately them, we name Spirit, Soul and Matter in man.

H. P. Blavatsky—In Secret Doctrine, Vol, 1, p. 80.

"Mind" is a name given to the sum of the States of Consciousness grouped under Thought, Will and Feeling.

H. P. Blavatsky—In The Secret Doctrine, Vol. 1, p. 69.

Point out the "Way"—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness. *Voice of the Silence—Fragment 11, p. 37.*

ON THE LOOKOUT

It is pleasant to welcome a magazine so well written and so interesting as "The Path," published at Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London, and edited by D. N. Dunlop, whose work for Theosophy has been continuous and effective. "The Path" is about to complete its fourth volume and it would be hard to speak too highly in praise of its pervasive intention and its technical excellencies.

Without doubt the *piece de resistance* of the present May issue is the article "Theosophy in the Dust," by W. W. Leisenring, B. A. And yet there is something amiss about Mr. Leisenring's title, since Theosophy is certainly not in the dust. A good many Theosophical societies—so called—are in the dust, although they seem unaware of the fact. A good many pseudo Theosophists, whose mental densities may palliate their Karmic offenses, have descended into unplumbed depths of silliness. But Theosophy itself is where it always was, waiting to be claimed by the selfless and the brave. And perhaps Mr. Leisenring has assumed too hastily that a few magazines represent the Theosophical thought of the world. Perhaps he has forgotten that folly makes more noise than wisdom, and that loud voices, like loud laughter, sometimes bespeak the vacant mind. If some "Theosophical" publications were actually representative of anything except editorial vagaries then indeed the state of the movement would be even more parlous than he supposes.

But the indictment is well brought. Truly these over-conspicuous Theosophists—and they take good care that we shall know their names—provide a spectacle calculated to make angels weep. "They are wrapped," says Mr. Leisenring, "in an amnion of ignorance and go about repeating the dogmas of their little books, thinking they know all about the wonderful Being Man, because they can 'explain' an anglicized Sanskrit term 'karma,' or 'prove' rebirth by psychic vision, or discourse on 'rounds' and 'races' of beings living on other globes." Yes, we have all heard them do it and grieved exceedingly. We have longed to remind them that H. P. B.'s mission, now bequeathed to us, was to teach brotherhood and to prove it to be a fact in nature. Never did she trouble to write one line except as a demonstration of human fraternity. She was utterly unconcerned with our intellectual conceits or the feeding of them. From her point of view it was a waste of time to learn anything of her lore unless it bore some practical fruit for the alleviation of human suffering. And so we have reached a point where there are all kinds of official organs and the like inflicted upon a contemptuous public, "but real students no longer read them, for what have they to do with the comings and goings of personalities and their platitudes?" What, indeed? Well may the author say that in all this welter of printer's ink and paper "there is not the slightest little sign of the original synthetic philosophy which was presented under the name Theosophy by H. P. Blavatsky in the great and masterly works *The Secret Doctrine*, and *Isis Unveiled*." And yet we have heard of members of some of these surprising Theosophical Societies who are warned by presidents and secretaries not to read the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, but to prefer the adulterations of those writings issued so copiously in primers and handbooks by those who, unblushing, allow themselves to be acclaimed as her successors and actually as her superiors.

It is to be feared that Mr. Leisenring's voice may be as that of one crying in the wilderness. Self-conceit and self-adulation are seldom reached by warnings. But they are reached by the disappointments and the catastrophes by which a mercifully quick Karma rewards our occult follies. Ears that are deaf to the terribly solemn warnings of H. P. B. herself, warnings and entreaties repeated a hundred times, are not likely to be open to less resonant voices. Nevertheless it is well that we should be reminded once

more of her forecasts of the future of the Society. She said: "Its future will depend almost entirely upon the degree of self-lessness, earnestness, devotion and, last but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members on whom it will fall to carry on the work. And to direct the society after the death of its founders. * * * Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard and fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart."

Other articles in the May issue of "The Path" are "Superhumanity," by Isabella de Steiger; "Art as a Basis of All Education," by W. Wroblewski; "The False Self and the True," by William L. Hare; "Periodicity," by Wilfrid G. Greaves, B. A.; and "Academic Mysticism," by Daniel Deronda.

Mark Twain relates that a friend of his youth was appointed as Chinese interpreter to the San Francisco law courts, a position that he was eminently qualified to occupy impartially since he knew not a word of Chinese. We may assume that a somewhat similar reason actuated the appointment of Henri Bergson to the presidency of the Society for Psychical Research since that eminent philosopher coyly admitted that he was wholly unacquainted with the investigations that have been carried on. But it does not matter very much. The investigations have produced nothing worth the trouble. The ponderous reports of the society are little more than the picture of a modern Brocken, a veritable orgy of ghost hunting, astral delirium, and Witch of Endorism. It is to be feared that M. Bergson has condescended.

But the learned President said some unusually good things. He was disposed to accept the facts of telepathy and it appeared to him that its phenomena are of general occurrence and within the experience of every individual, although not generally identified as such. In common parlance M. Bergson hit the nail on the head. The phenomena of telepathy are indeed of general occurrence. The human mind, so far from being a holy of holies, now throws open its hospitable doors to every tramp or vagrant thought blown hither and thither like falling leaves in a graveyard. If our little fingers were half so uncontrollable as our minds, if they acted half so erratically and irresponsibly, we should have them amputated as the lesser of two evils. Now here is the opportunity for M. Bergson. If he would make of the Society for Psychical Research something more than an association of ghost hunters let him suggest that they put what little they know of telepathy—and it is pitifully little—to some practical use. If the phenomena of telepathy are of common occurrence let them suggest to their students to do what in them lies to make the occurrence an uncommon one. M. Bergson is an authority on what he calls psychology. He is probably aware that human character is the direct result of thought, that it is indeed nothing but thought that has gradually become polarised. The human mind that is perpetually open to every passing vagrant telepathic impulse is obviously on the road to moral idiocy, with its destructible irresponsibilities. Let him suggest further that the most practical of all experimentation is an effort to control the mind, to compel it to shut its doors to every thought that has not given the password of purity and of deference to the Soul that is above it. The psychic researchers might deprecate the use of the word Soul. Probably they would. It smacks of religion, and therefore of superstition. They would prefer to talk of the subconscious self, or the unconscious self, or the subliminal self, or one of those high-sounding terms designed to impress the world with the conviction that they know something. But names do not matter much. The main thing is that the mind should be controlled, and if the average mind works automatically in obedience to outside impressions it is an undesirable state of things and should be checked. So far the Society for Psychical Research can hardly be said to have done any good to any living being. We may even believe that it has done some harm. Here, at last, is its opportunity to evolve some kind of practical philosophy, and if it should be in

need of authoritative guidance it can find it in the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali who knew all about telepathy thousands of years ago, or in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, who has had a hundred times more influence upon the thought of the world than all the psychic researchers in Christendom.

Dr. James Henry Breasted, professor of Egyptology and Oriental History in the University of Chicago and author of "The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt" (Scribner's), is at some pains to explain to us why the Egyptians believed in immortality. That they believed in it because they knew it to be true has not occurred to the learned professor, who would probably think it quite natural to accept a creed because it appeared in some Thirty-nine Articles or Westminster Confession, but is surprised to find it under other auspices. The Egyptians, we are told, believed in a hereafter because such a belief was greatly favored and influenced by the fact that the conditions of soil and climate resulted in such a remarkable preservation of the human body as may be found under natural conditions nowhere else in the world." So now we know how the milk got into the cocoanut, and how the Egyptians happened to hit upon a theological truth which had not then received the sanctions of our little Bethels. And now will the professor kindly explain how this same belief in a hereafter is to be found throughout the whole human race and at every stage of its existence. It can hardly be due to the "conditions of soil and climate," seeing how widely those conditions vary. The University of Chicago seems determined to preserve its reputation for humor.

The New York *Sun* devotes seven columns to an exposition of reincarnation based upon Dr. Charles Arym's supposed recollections of past lives. So far as Dr. Arym himself is concerned he seems to be an unassuming individual. Those who believe that they remember past lives usually identify themselves with Cleopatra, and the extent of the Cleopatra cult is quite surprising. But Dr. Arym makes no claim to have been anyone in particular. He admits without a blush that all his incarnations, so far as he can remember them, were insignificant. On one occasion, it is true, he so far departed from his role of mediocrity as to assassinate King Mithradates of Pontus, but as his majesty was an enemy of Rome, and Dr. Arym happened at the moment to be a Roman soldier, the rash act may be excused on the ground of patriotism, which, as we all know, will excuse anything. But with this one exception Dr. Arym was one of the multitude, and as a matter of fact he seems to have cultivated the habit of dying in infancy, which is somewhat to his credit.

The account is quite an interesting one for those who are interested in that kind of thing. But it is somewhat spoiled by the efforts of a *Sun* reporter or correspondent to explain what reincarnation means, a task for which he is mentally unfitted. Madame Blavatsky, we are told to our surprise, declared that she could recall the lives she lived in the twilight years of the world's history. After a somewhat full study of Madame Blavatsky's writings and teachings we can declare with confidence that Madame Blavatsky never said anything of the sort. Madame Blavatsky never talked about herself or her attainments, nor did she consider that a memory of past lives was a desirable acquisition.

Dr. Arym is doubtless an honest man and believes what he says, but we may doubt if he has properly interpreted his experiences. There is a phase of psychism that may open for us some of the records of the past, and the tendency to identify ourselves with those records is a natural one. But there is only one way in which the memory of past lives can legitimately be obtained. That memory lies hidden in the Soul and it is only by attaining to the soul consciousness that it can be reached. And the soul consciousness comes only with the death of selfishness.